

**“The Thing
That Hath Been...”
The Cycle Of Apostasy**

**By
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Dedicated to the Memory of. . .



Foy E. Wallace, Jr. (1896 - 1979)

As a young preacher, I sat at brother Wallace's feet and imbibed the spirit of what a soldier of Jesus Christ should be. For most of his 83 years, he wielded the sword of the Spirit, defended the faith once delivered, and never retreated in the heat of conflict. He warned against, and would abominate and abhor, what mainstream churches of Christ have become.

Beneath the Texas soil he loved, his mortal remains repose beside his beloved Virgie's awaiting the resurrection. Inscribed on his headstone is, "Soldier of The Cross." That he was, and we shall not soon see his like again. I loved him much.

Introduction

I firmly believe with all of my heart that the church is now facing the greatest dangers it has ever faced in my lifetime. Dangers from within. Modernism, denominationalism, new hermeneutics, liberalism, and liberals remind me of the old farmer who kissed his mule. His explanation was, “Well it’s every man to his own choice.” But his neighbor down the road didn’t want to kiss **his** mule. He wanted to kiss only his wife, and he was called a **legalist** (Brownlow, “The Preservation of the Faith,”).

When Harrell Davidson preached in Midwest City, Okla., Guy N. Woods and E.R. Harper were invited as guest speakers for a lectureship. During their visit, Harrell drove them to see Oklahoma Christian College’s campus. In conversation on the trip, brother Woods predicted that 55 percent of churches of Christ would be lost to apostasy and only 45 percent would remain faithful. According to Harrell, brother Harper replied, “I think you’re wrong Guy. I believe it will be 75-25.” Of course, neither man was a prophet but they could discern the times and trends and it is likely that brother Harper was closer to the correct figures.

We are witnessing a repetition of 19th century heresy today among “mainstream churches of Christ” who **may** comprise about 75 percent of the total in our country, if not much more. Their elders are in denial of, ignorant of, or simply do not care about, false doctrines and practices. They have adopted erroneous practices they call *expedients* and have sat so long like frogs in gradually boiling water that they cannot perceive Scriptural reality. They ignore Bible authority, are saturated with doctrinal and moral error, have left the New Testament pattern of the church, and languidly float in a cesspool of human authority.

A single heresy resulted in the emergence of the Disciples of Christ denomination from the mid to late 1800s. That was the adoption of **expediency** as a **source** of Biblical authority. In recent decades mainstream churches of Christ have adopted the same error, portending the emergence of a new denomination devoid of all distinction as the church that Jesus built—a trend observed a quarter of a century ago:

There is already a wide breach between brethren, but it is destined to grow wider and finally become an unbridgeable chasm, even as it did a century ago. On the one hand there are those of us who, like Paul, are determined to shrink not from “declaring the whole counsel of God” and who are “set for the defence of the gospel” (Acts 20:27; Phi. 1:16). On the other hand, there are many who have ceased to “give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard [the Gospel]” and they have already “drifted away from them” (Heb. 2:1). These are those who can no longer be content with the purity and simplicity of the primitive Gospel. While we remain firmly rooted in the apostles’ doctrine, they have cut themselves loose from its restrictions. They are still in the drifting and changing process. The full extent of their eventual apostasy is any man’s guess, but many of them have adopted seed principles sufficiently corrupt to take them to full-blown denominational status. It is not a question of **whether** we must cease to have any company with them, but only one of **when**. Some are already so far gone that fellowshiping them would be little different from fellowshiping the Disciples of Christ denomination (McClish, “An Inspired Warning to Change Agents”).

For decades, faithful brethren have pointed out in bulletins, periodicals, sermons, and lectureships that the emperor is wearing no clothes. Their warnings fell on deaf ears. Members of mainstream churches reacted with invectives of “witch hunters,” “legalists,” “hate mongers,”

and “Pharisees.” The mainstream “became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools” (Rom. 1:21-22). In their self-imposed blindness, mainstream churches continue to adopt doctrines, practices, and programs that haven’t a scintilla of Bible authority.

Those projects and programs are their idols, enshrined in the “brotherhood” upon the pedestal of **expediency** and anyone who dares to question them suffers censure and/or ostracism. Among their idols are periodicals, schools of preaching, well-known preachers, Social Gospel programs under the euphemism of “ministries,” and so-called “Christian” colleges.

Verily, there is no new thing under the sun. “Is there *any* thing whereof it may be said, See, this *is* new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us.” The cycle of apostasy, repeated 150 years ago is again being repeated in churches of Christ.

Apostasy always comes in new clothes, but they cover the **same** heresy plaguing God’s people from time immemorial. Men forget God and substitute their ways for His. Adam and Eve were the first. By Noah’s time, men had so forgotten God that the thoughts of their hearts were only evil continually. That pattern continued through Israel’s wilderness wanderings, the conquest of Canaan, their dark ages during the Judges, the divided kingdom, and following the Babylonian captivity.

In the apostolic era, Paul warned of those within the church who would draw away disciples after themselves (Acts 20:30). He dealt with apostasy among the Galatian churches (Gal. 1:6-9), told the Thessalonians that a “falling away” would come before the Lord’s return (2 Thess. 2:1-5), warned Timothy that men would reject the truth and turn to fables (2 Tim. 4:1-4), and commanded Titus to reject a heretic after the first and second admonition (Titus 3:10-11). Peter said as there were false teachers of old, so there will be false teachers among us (2 Pet. 2:1-2). John commanded the faithful to “try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1). Of Israel, God said, “Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? yet my people have forgotten me days without end” (Jer. 2:22).

Through all of history, there was never an age when man did not change the glory of the incorruptible God into one of his own image. That was true of the ancients, of the first century church, the restored church in the 19th century, and mainstream churches of Christ today. Like Israel at Sinai, they “sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.” This time, their golden calf is the Social Gospel in the garb of expediency—the thesis we prove herein.

Within this book is only a representative sampling of mainstream churches of Christ who are as liberal as digressives in the 19th century. Space forbids an examination of every mainstream church, “the which, if they should be written every one, that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written.” Therefore, this work looks at a cross section of apostate churches still claiming to be the one that Jesus built. For the first time, some readers may have their eyes opened to the reality of doctrinal division among us. Some will be indifferent, many may be surprised, multitudes may be angered and my name anathema to them. It matters not. “Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?” (Gal. 4:16). “For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ” (Gal. 1:10).

I am far past my allotted three score years upon the earth and, doubtless, have little time left to “cry aloud and spare not” and determined that while I live on time’s side of eternity, “they shall

not pass”—sentiments well expressed by Leroy Brownlow in 1991:

I cannot be true to the church, I cannot be true to myself, I cannot be true to the God of Heaven unless I call attention to some of the winds of doctrine blowing against us today (Brownlow, “The Preservation of the Faith”).

I detest and abominate what the bride of Christ has become in the hands of godless men. She has been stripped of her heavenly bridal attire and re clothed in the trappings of a mainstream harlot. What I have written needs to be said, and I am neither ashamed nor afraid to mark those who have “gone out from us.” I **will not** stand before my Lord in Judgment with blood on my hands because I stood silently aside while the Lord’s beautiful bride was mauled in the hands of spiritual rapists. Brother McClish wrote, “It is not a question of **whether** we must cease to have any company with them, but only one of **when**.” The when is **now**.

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Elk City, Oklahoma
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Chapter One

An Emerging Denomination

A new denomination is emerging from mainstream churches of Christ. Like the Amorites, their “iniquity is not yet full” (Gen. 15:16) but it is rapidly filling. We define mainstream churches as follows:

1. Churches who have incrementally and fundamentally altered the doctrine of Christ in varying degrees (Gen. 3:4).
2. Churches who may not preach error, but willingly fellowship churches and preachers who do (1 John 1:6-7; 2 John 9-11).
3. Churches who still preach the gospel plan of salvation, but in less distinctive terms than those expressed in the New Testament and neglect to preach “all the counsel of God” (Acts 20:27).
4. Churches who, with their money, time, and resources emphasize seminars, social gatherings, societies, meals, ladies’ days, youth activities and social services to the neglect of preaching the gospel to save the lost (Mark 16:15).
5. Churches who may not agree with error but remain silent when it arises and refuse to “earnestly contend for the faith” (Jude 3).
6. Churches, like number 5, with long standing reputations for being “sound in the faith” and exert a wide influence among churches of Christ (Rev. 3:1).
7. Churches who disdain and repudiate the exposure of doctrinal error and its teachers—whether among denominations or within the body of Christ (Rom. 16:17-18)—and pejoratively refer to those who expose error as **witch hunters**.
8. Churches who have neither preached error nor fellowshiped those who do and previously opposed them, but have developed a **new** approach to fellowship with mainstream churches of Christ and preachers. These have arisen since 2005 as “Neo-mainstream churches of Christ.”

These definitions are by no means exhaustive, but they generally describe churches who consider themselves—and are considered by the general public—as mainstream churches of Christ. They have multiple views of religious authority that stretch across the spectrum from those who are taking their first small steps into apostasy to those who have reached its final stage. That journey is not completed in leaps and bounds, but incrementally from small to great. Apostasy begins with the **attitude** that human wisdom is equal, or superior, to Biblical authority, then blooms in the guise of **expedients** or **options**. That is a hallmark of liberalism.

I am using the term liberalism to refer to a certain attitude and approach to religion that is unwilling to be as strict and definitive as God is in His Word. It is called *liberalism* due to its misplaced *generosity* in *giving away* that which it does not possess. It refuses to bind things that God has bound. This approach treats matters of Scriptural obligation as if they were matters of mere option (McClish, “Liberalism and Anti-Isms—Two Erroneous Extremes”).

Liberalism is created by any doctrine that looses men from what the complete, final, authoritative, infallible, rightly-divided Word of God binds upon them (2 Tim. 2:15; Rom. 10:17; 2 Cor. 5:7; Col. 3:17)...a liberal doctrine is any doctrine that allows human be-

ings greater liberty than God permits them in, by, and through His word (Col. 3:17; 2 Cor. 5:7; 2 John 9-11). It confuses an **obligation** (the thing that must be done) with an **option** (a way or method for an obligation to be discharged that circumstances and situations may change). Thus, *liberalism* covers a broad spectrum of doctrines [All emphasis, his] (Brown, 2).

Substituting what they call *expedients* for Scriptural obligation describes mainstream churches of Christ. Their **expedients** are human innovations that manifest their departures from the faith.

Dictionary.com defines *mainstream* as, “The principal or dominant course, tendency, or trend” and *freedictionary.com* says it is “The prevailing current of thought, influence, or activity: Representing the prevalent attitudes, values, and practices of a society or group” Among synonyms for *mainstream* are *dominant, average, common, current, general, normal, primary, standard, accepted, and regular*.

Mainstream churches of Christ project a public image which the **world perceives** as the principal tendency representing the prevalent attitudes and practices of churches of Christ. The world’s perception is that these churches are dominant, normal, standard, and regular examples of churches of Christ. That is false. Mainstream churches have departed from the New Testament pattern. They are liberal in their views and handling of Scripture, and have more affinity with Rome, Calvin, Luther, and Knox than they do the Lord Jesus Christ.

Their flirtation with liberalism has led them into apostasy. They are in full fellowship with each other and have become a “progressive” faction that will eventually result in a new denomination. That is already a fact in the case of former churches of Christ like Richland Hills in Fort Worth, Quail Springs in Oklahoma City, and Oak Hills in San Antonio.

Of the latter and its preacher Max Lucado, the *Baptist Press* glowingly exulted:

Lucado’s church is Church of Christ—but not a typical Church of Christ. For starters, musical instruments are used (although there is still one a cappella service). Also, the church has a baptistic view of baptism—that is, that baptism isn’t required for salvation. Recently, his church, which has some 5,000 members, even changed its name from ‘Oak Hills Church of Christ’ to simply ‘Oak Hills Church’ (www.bpnews.net).

History confirms our thesis. In the mid 1800s, churches of Christ traveled the same downward course that resulted in the emergence of new denomination in 1906—The Disciples of Christ. A half-century earlier, Moses E. Lard recognized the liberal straws then carried on winds of change that resulted in that denomination:

He is a poor observer of men and things who does not see slowly growing up among us a class of men who can no longer be satisfied with the ancient gospel and the ancient order of things. These men must have changes; and silently they are preparing the mind of the brotherhood to receive changes (*Lard’s Quarterly*, “The Symptoms of the Future,” cited by West, 1:131).

In a near prophetic description of the church’s present condition, L.F. Bittle wrote to Benjamin Franklin ten years later:

For the last few years your people have had a great deal of unpleasant controversy, and some harsh wrangling, over matters entirely unknown to the past generation of Disciples. They, too, had their troubles, no doubt, and some of them may have said bitter words in consequence of personal disagreements. But they never had anything like the

alienation that now exists in certain places in regard to matters which should not be so much as named among a people who claim to stand before the world as the representative champions of the Bible, and the Bible alone, as the rule of faith and practice (Ibid., 132).

The same trends exist today and “he is a poor observer of men and things who does not see slowly growing up among us a class of men who can no longer be satisfied with the ancient gospel and the ancient order of things.” For more than five decades, change agents have been “silently preparing the mind of the brotherhood to receive changes.” Those changes are now part and parcel of mainstream churches of Christ.

Fifty years ago the tip of the spear consisted of heretics such as Logan J. Fox, Thomas P. Hardeman, Carl L. Etter, Cecil L. Franklin, William P. Reedy, and other essayists whose works were published in the radical *Voices of Concern*. That book was published in 1966 and edited by Robert Meyers. In their wake, came notables like Rubel Shelly, Max Lucado, F. LaGard Smith, Royce Money, Joe Beam, and their coteries of ovine disciples.

The history of the church is the history of war between the forces of God and Satan and so long as generations of men come and go it will never end. It began in Eden with the first blow of the serpent (Gen. 3:1-6) and was predicted for all ensuing history in the promise of the One who would come of the seed of woman (Gen. 3:15). It raged through the history of the Patriarchs, the nation of Israel, the life of Jesus, the early church, and through every century since. It has never abated and never will until the last trump shall sound (1 Cor. 15:24-26, 54-57).

The denominational world offers its brand of “Christianity” as a life of ease. But the faithful know that serving Christ is a lifelong struggle (Matt. 16:24-25). It is the life of a soldier who must “endure hardness” (2 Tim. 2:3-4), put on the “whole armor of God” (Eph. 6:13-18), and fight “the good fight of faith” (1 Tim. 6:12). The Christian soldier wields the sword of the Spirit in an endless war for men’s souls. He **must** know the history of those who fought the same war before him, learn its lessons, that he serves for life, and **never** compromise.

There is no neutrality in the kingdom of God in the battle between truth and error, right and wrong. It’s not a question of our “going into battle.” God has already made that decision for us. The very day that we were raised up from the waters of baptism, that very day we were enrolled in the army of the Lord and pointed toward warfare and we have fought a thousand battles and the struggle goes on; and the battle today is not just for today, but for a vast future (Brownlow, “The Preservation of the Faith”).

History is cyclical. It not only recounts the past but portends the present. The philosopher said, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” That men have forgotten the past is obvious. The church in our century is in the midst of the same apostasy of a century and a half ago. What **has** happened not only **can** happen, but usually **does**—again and again. Foy E. Wallace, Jr. noted that fact 78 years ago:

If history repeats itself in the rise and the fall of empires and in the destinies of nations, it is nonetheless true in the development and the declension of the church. This antecedent thought dates back to Israel, God’s Old Testament church, whose mistakes have been repeated in the history of the church of his Son through the ages of its existence. Israel’s was a history of gradual departure, the end of which was rebellion against God’s way. Moses lifted up his voice of tearful warning against any deviation from the Oracles of Sinai, but the feet of Israel wandered from the way. God raised up prophet

after prophet to guide their wayward feet, yet Israel wandered. The end of the story was national decline, captivity and exile, forfeited promises, and rejection.

This Biblical record is not mere ancient history. It was written for the learning and the admonition of those upon whom the ends of the ages are come. The lesson is aptly put in the words of Jeremiah: “My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water” (Jer. 2:13).

Jeremiah, the weeping but brave, lion-hearted prophet, struck the vital cause of Israel’s exile. God touched the prophet’s mouth and his message flamed forth: “My people have committed two evils.” In their idolatry Israel had not committed one evil merely, like the heathen idol devotees who know no better. Besides the evil of idolatry Israel added the sin of forsaking the Living God whom they had known. Forsaking God, “the fountain of living waters,” for idol nonentities was like taking cracked and leaky cisterns hewn out by men in preference to the ever flowing supply of fresh waters that a natural fountain could give. In turning from God to idols, Israel had abandoned fountains for tanks-man-made, broken cisterns that could hold no water.

How readest thou? Can we not see the application in our own deviations? The denominations, like the heathen idolaters, know no better, but in our departures from the way, the church like Israel commits two evils: first, the evil of the thing done; second, the evil of forsaking what we have known in the doing of it.

Wise and just Samuel was rejected for young and handsome Saul. The choice seems to have been made on looks—mere appearances. Today, many are more concerned about how the church looks to the world—outside appearances—than about what God wants the church to be. The result of such will prove sadder and far more fatal than with Israel, who rejected not Samuel, but God (“The Evils Of God’s People,” 2).

The bane of the church is that it forgets the lessons of history. In every generation, “pure minds” must be stirred up “by way of remembrance” (2 Pet. 3:1). Because it has either been forgotten, or ignored, 19th century apostasy is now being repeated in mainstream churches of Christ.

As it is today, apostasy was rooted in heresies of men a century and a half ago. They rejected God’s way for their own ways and took their place as a sect among all others. Heresies served God’s purpose then and serve it now: “For there must also be heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you” (1 Cor 11:19). Heresies winnow the wheat from the chaff, separate apostates and manifest the faithful. That was true when Paul wrote it, it was true 150 years ago, and it remains true today.

Heresy is from the Greek *hairesis*, which Strong defines as, “properly a *choice*, that is, (specifically) a *party* or (abstractly) *disunion*. (“heresy” is the Greek word itself.): - heresy [which is the Greek word itself], sect” (*eSword*).

Robertson says *hairesis* describes a theory that results in division:

Heresy is theoretical schism, schism practical heresy...God’s purpose in these factions makes the proved one become manifest. ‘These *haireseis* are a magnet attracting unsound and unsettled minds’ (Findlay) (*eSword*).

Heresy is a **choice**. It is the father of division and the first step on the road to sectarianism. It

begins in the heart (Matt. 12:34), becomes a faction, and results in division. That was the result 150 years ago with the introduction of two human innovations into the work and worship of the church—The American Christian Missionary Society and mechanical instruments of music. From the mid to late 1800s, brethren recognized and exposed the heresy that produced them. Of their “progressive” spirit, West wrote: “The missionary society and the instrumental music...were but two expressions of the attempt at progress. Back of these and underlying them were dangerous trends of thought” (2:130, 131).

Those “dangerous trends of thought” were theoretical schisms that Robertson defined. They were the seeds of schism, factions, and consequent *dichostasia*—“standings apart” (Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 3:3).

Another observer of those dangerous trends was Robert Graham. West described him as “ordinarily a man of milder moods” who “saw there was a radical change underway in the church during these years.” (Ibid., 132). Graham wrote:

...there is among ourselves a falling off from the simplicity of the gospel, a conforming to the mode of *other* denominations, the loss of zeal for the spread of the gospel for fear people will think us solicitous only to build up a party, the decrease of Bible reading and study among us of late, the growing disposition to recognize the distinction of clergy and laity in our churches, and among much more that might be named, our conforming to the unscriptural phraseology of sects, to say nothing of our adopting many of their anti-scriptural customs. With the uniform experience of past ages before us, the tendency of men to make the gospel popular under the plea of extending its influence, and that, too, even at the cost of its purity and power to save, should make us keen to detect and fearless in our condemnation of all departures from the faith (West, 1:132).

The missionary society and instrumental music were symptoms, not the cause, of division. The cause was man’s age-old failure to respect God’s authority. The trends that Lard and Graham saw—*theoretical schism*—were many and culminated in sundering fellowship between brethren when the Christian Church sect was manifested as apostate in 1906: “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us: but *they went out*, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us”(1 John 2:19).

Another sect has been incubating within the church for more than 50 years. In its late embryonic form it is composed of mainstream churches of Christ who have introduced unauthorized practices into the work and worship of the church that are today accepted without question. Allied with them are neo-mainstream churches of Christ who may not **practice** error, but ignore it in the mainstream and remain in fellowship with them.

Apostasy never occurs in one fell swoop. It is silent, devious, cunning, manipulating, and incremental. This incubating sect consists of churches, who were formerly sound in the faith. They preached the gospel to save souls and worshiped according to the New Testament pattern, neither adding to nor subtracting from the faith once delivered. But over the years that changed as heresies took root in the hearts of their elders and preachers and they ceased to practice only that for which we have Christ’s authority (Col. 3:17).

In 1966, the liberal/progressive magazine, *Mission Messenger* published the book of essays edited by Robert Meyers, entitled, *Voices Of Concern*. The apostates who authored those essays

vented their spleen against the body of Christ, calling for radical changes in it. The changes they advocated constituted a rejection of New Testament authority, particularly in the exclusive nature of the church. In the introduction, Meyers wrote:

We consider variety itself a significant part of the lesson this book would teach. Free minds cannot be predicted. The Spirit of God really does move at liberty like the invisible air, and it impels men in various ways. There are writers here who believe in the principle of Restorationism, and men who do not; men who believe in what is loosely called Fundamentalism, and men who do not; men who are restrained and analytical, and men who verge upon the mystical in their rhapsodies about the guidance of God's Spirit. The book obviously means to urge no one way of religious expression, but plead from such evidence as is here the need for *unity in diversity* [Emph. his] (Meyers, Introductory, 5).

Voices of Concern is the clearest statement of heretical thinking extant in churches of Christ more than 50 years ago. That same thinking is echoed today by those who call for *unity in diversity*. Some of the essayists may be familiar; others may not be. They were, Logan J. Fox, J. P. Sanders, Laurie L. Hibbett, Norman L. Parks, Thomas P. Hardeman, Carl L. Etter, Roy Key, Ralph V. Graham, Margaret Edson O'Dowd, William K. Floyd, Cecil L. Franklin, Charles E. Warren, Ralph Milton Stolz, David R. Darnell, Martha Armstrong, William P. Reedy, and Robert Meyers. They were progressive heretics—the progenitors of modern change agents and their fellow travelers, mainstream churches of Christ. They despised the New Testament pattern for the church, articulated their heresies, and urged them upon churches of Christ as others of their ilk have done in recent years. Hitler published his intentions in *Mein Kampf*, but he was largely ignored by the world until his plan became the mainstream in Germany. *Voices of Concern* was a religious *Mein Kampf* and brethren largely ignored it. Now its philosophy has come to fruition in mainstream churches of Christ

But more than six decades ago, **faithful** brethren **could** “discern this time” and warned of those heresies. As early as 1957, E.R. Harper saw that departures from the old paths were taking place and warned:

The church is in danger of another digression. The “innocent things” being practiced today by loyal members of the body of Christ, because they do not think of the harm, are alarming to those of us who have been in the battle line for years. The same cause that took us away in the century just closed [the 19th century, JB] will lead us into apotasy today; people not familiar with the Truth of the Bible do not know the issues that are troubling the church today. The modern pulpit does not discuss problems, Church members do not have conviction against certain practices, as they once had. We are trying too much to be like the world around us. Too much show and not enough teaching. Too many churches are saying, “We are not bothered with this or that. Why preach on such things? Preach on subjects that will build the church.” ...Digression looks innocent at first, and deceives honest people. It does not look as if it will do much harm. In the beginning of digression, few people see its flower (14).

Another was Ira Y. Rice, Jr. who wrote three volumes entitled, *Axe On The Root*. The first was issued in 1966, the second in 1967, and the third in 1970. In all three volumes, brother Rice documented churches' departures from the New Testament pattern and warned of their dangers. What he wrote in the introduction to his second volume a half century ago was true in 1967 and

to a far greater degree describes the church in 2019:

As far as I can see, the time has come when brethren generally need to speak up and make themselves known as to just where they stand on the basic issues involved among us. As far as I can tell, we are in the anomalous position of having what *should* exist as *two separate brotherhoods* trying to stay together as *one*. I am for peace and unity, of course, as is every sincere brother and sister in the Lord—but not *at any price!* And when the price of staying together is fellowship with error and those who espouse it, far better that we separate. How well I remember those vicious, miserable heart-rending years of trying to fellowship those who would not fellowship us, leading up to the eventual open break with those espousing anti-cooperation among churches. It was not until our brethren began *marking* those who were causing the divisions and offenses, *withdrawing* from them and *avoiding* them that a measure of peace ever could be restored among the churches. And so I am persuaded it also will be in this present time [All emph. IYR, Jr.] (2:7).

The two separate brotherhoods referenced by brother Rice still exist, only in a larger measure. One is the mainstream churches of Christ who have loosed where God has bound. The other is composed of sound churches who still demand a “thus saith the Lord” in faith and practice. These two brotherhoods have nothing in common.

Churches of Christ who still walk in the old paths are marginalized by mainstream churches of Christ. Because of that, the world considers them insignificant factions—as the pejorative term “sect” was hurled at the church by her enemies in the first century (Acts 24:5, 14). The “walking Bibles”—as members of the church were known in the 1930s, 40s, and 50s—are still among us, but much fewer in number. They are shunned as “legalists” and “radicals” by mainstream churches of Christ who long ago surrendered their distinction as the church that Jesus built.

Another was Foy E. Wallace, Jr. who incessantly warned of false doctrines contained in so-called “modern versions” of the Bible. Brother Wallace exposed those in *A Review of the New Versions* in 1973. In it, he covered *The Revised Standard Version (RSV)*, *Today’s English Version (TEV)*—also known as *Good News For Modern Man*—*The New English Bible (NEB)*, and *The New International Version (NIV)*. The adoption of this babel of conflicting versions by liberals in the church fed their heresies during the 1960s and 70s and continues bearing nefarious fruit today.

At Freed-Hardeman College’s lectureship in 1973, G.K. Wallace said, “If the denominations cannot read their creeds out of the Bible, they will write them into it.” That is precisely what they did and heretical brethren bought those pseudo Bibles by the hundreds. In his preface, brother Wallace wrote:

As for me, it is my determination to remain uninhibited, uncontrolled and unintimidated, as many years as providence allows me, to make the churches all over the nation aware of the conditions that imperil us in the midst of the dangers that threaten to envelop us. It is my firm conviction that the greatest immediate danger confronting the churches of Christ is the general acceptance of the pseudo-versions of the Bible (xxxv).

In the Foreword to brother Wallace’s book, Leroy Brownlow wrote:

We have had a rash of translations to break out among us in which very little has been

added to truth, faith, and stability, but much has been added to error, doubt, and instability. Consequently many people are confused. Many wonder. Many are insecure. Now when you ask in a Bible class ‘What saith the Scriptures?’ you may get a dozen answers, and many of them are only the theological views of the so-called translators or translator (just one). It is hard to have unity when your thinking is guided by such a source of division. So far as I know, no one opposes a new translation, which is true. The opposition centers around translations loaded with errors that pervert the gospel and hurt the church. It is granted that every man has the right to publish a commentary, but it is also contended that no man has the right to offer one to the public in the guise of a Bible. The purity of the Bible should not be violated. The recklessness with which it is now being made merchandise of in a multiplicity of outrageous abuses heaps on mankind an insufferable wrong. Our first concern in Bible study is to be sure we have the unmixed word of God—as nearly pure as translators can render it—and then we can go from there to learn its meaning. Surely this comes ahead of spoon feeding which makes much ado about simple expression that is given priority over correctness. What good is a Bible easily understood, if you don’t know whether or not it is true? And if truth means nothing, why read it in the first place? (Ibid., xi, xii).

The 1960s witnessed numerous false doctrines adopted and taught by members of the church. During that decade, American society underwent a cultural revolution. Led by the hippie movement, it was a stormy, and often violent, period of rebellion against long established civil, social, and moral standards. The same spirit infected the church in a rebellion against **Bible** authority. One of its fruits was widespread adoption of Pentecostal doctrines that spread through the church like a prairie fire.

Popular singer Pat Boone, who had been the “Poster Boy” for churches of Christ in the 1950s, led the way. Boone published his heresy in a book entitled, *A New Song*, in which he chronicled his, and his wife Shirley’s, journey into Pentecostal tongue speaking. *A New Song* explained their rejection of what he called the “cold formalism” of New Testament Christianity for the warm emotionalism, of feel-good Pentecostalism.

Heretics are devious. They do not enter churches announcing their intent to teach doctrines opposed to the New Testament. Instead, like Copperheads lurking in the grass, they strike the faithful with their spiritual poison when their victims least expect it. Boone was no exception. James D. Bales exposed his devious nature in his reply to Boone’s book entitled, *Pat Boone and the Gift of Tongues*:

Do some tongue speakers quietly spread their beliefs without letting the church know about it? First, Joyce Dennis was studying with Pat, and seeking the baptism of the Spirit, as early as February, 1969. Well over a year later, Pat was still trying to keep his beliefs from the brethren as a whole. ...Second, in some meetings of the Full Gospel Business Men’s Fellowship, people were told to remain in their churches and influence them (225).

In 1967, Foy E. Wallace, Jr. published a refutation of Pentecostal error in *The Mission and Medium of The Holy Spirit*, which he began by defining its nature:

In the realm of religion there is an affectation known as Pietism. It is an estoteric system that originated in Germany as a religious movement in the seventeenth century. The distinctive tenet of this inner circle society was an emphasis on the devotional over the in-

tellectual based on emotional experience. The modern Pietist is an adherent of this medieval theology of Pietism in the form of an excessive religiosity. It is not piety, nor a synonym for it, nor a derivation of it. The term Pietism is the cognomen for that religious belief—the designation for the principles and practices of the class of persons who advocate an immediate experiential sanctification, a sentimentalism that substitutes feeling for intellect, a substitution of a religion of feeling for the religion of the will. ...The extent to which this “Operation Holy Spirit” has developed is evident in the wave of emotionalism across the nation which is crystallizing into a new movement within our ranks. The promoters of it have had a field day, without significant or effective opposition, through the printed mediums extending from California to Tennessee, in articles full of error, some of which could be adapted and printed without comment or exception in a Holiness magazine and in most of the denominational publication organs. The emphasis of this revolutionary movement is on the activities of the Holy Spirit apart from the word (1, 2).

More than a quarter of a century ago, Perry B. Cotham wrote that, “the church is in danger of another digression...the future of the church is at the turning point” (*Firm Foundation*, Aug., 1992, p. 28). Other faithful men sounded similar warnings, but were ignored by mainstream heretics who desired “like all the nations” (1 Sam. 8:20), and “**like** the nations” they have become. In hundreds of places across the world, mainstream churches of Christ can no longer be distinguished from denominations.

Regardless of whether brethren are willing to admit it, mainstream churches of Christ have **already** become another denomination. As Judah of old, they have rejected the old paths (Jer. 6:16) and are under indictment by God Himself: “For my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water” (Jer. 2:13).

The doctrinal division that now exists is nothing new. The same division occurred from 1830 to 1880. John F. Rowe addressed it as “two distinct parties...growing up in the church” (West, 2:224):

That there is rapidly growing up among us a new order of things in contrast with the old order of things, as advocated by Alexander Campbell and his associates, is a fact that is becoming more apparent and pronounced every day. Anyone who will take the pains to read the *Christian Baptist*, edited fifty years ago by Alexander Campbell, and continuing seven years, will discover in reading his series of articles on *The Ancient Order of Things* that, when placed in contrast with much of our church literature of the present day, and in contrast with much of our pulpit teaching there is growing up and taking form “The Modern Order of Things.” It pains me to make this statement, but the fact is so patent and palatable that it is in vain to try to longer conceal it. We might as well prepare to meet the issue first as last. We are grieved to say that the line of separation is becoming more distinct every day. There are two classes among us—those who represent “The Ancient Order of Things” and those who represent “The New Order of Things.” It is manifest that these two parties are not only not acting in sympathy, but that the men of the New Order of Things are determined to crush down, if possible, the Ancient Order of Things (“The Old and the New Order,” [Cited by West, 2:224-225]).

Modern heresies have become division. The ignorant, undiscerning masses may not perceive

that fact, but is stark reality. Mainstream churches of Christ have left the faith. They are the “New Order of Things” in our century, “determined to crush down...The Ancient Order of Things.”

This new denomination of mainstream churches has been a half-century in coming and parallels the emergence of the Christian Church in the 1800s. Rice’s “two brotherhoods” are the modern incarnation of Rowe’s “two distinct parties” and they are far more apparent than when brother Rice described them 50 years ago.

Chapter Two

When The Floodgate Was Opened

The flood of error in which mainstream churches of Christ are awash had its inception in a lone heretical concept as old as Cain's, Nadab's, and Abihu's offerings. That concept says that whatever God does not forbid in religion is permitted to man's discretion as an **expedient**. After all, "God didn't tell Cain **not** to offer the fruit of the ground, or Nadab and Abihu **not** to offer strange fire."

Resurrected by W.K. Pendleton 150 years ago, that concept, intoned by mainstream churches today, opened the floodgate of error. It found expression in the American Christian Missionary Society in 1849, but not until 1866 was it articulated and adopted as the official position of the new sect emerging from the church. That was the year Pendleton saddled up and rode out on his horse called *Expediency*.

From 1849 to 1866, the Missionary Society had its opponents but was, in a large measure, successful in supplanting the work of the church across the world. That began to change in December, 1866 when one of its chief advocates, the *American Christian Review's* Editor, Ben Franklin, finally recognized that it could not be defended by God's Word and began opposing it on that basis. Reaction to Franklin's change was vitriolic from the society's defenders. To that, he replied:

At all events, we have come to the time to rest the question whether *love and devotion* to the creation of a few individuals, in the form of an outside society, with laws and names unknown to the law of God, is sufficient to sink a man with more than thirty years' labor and devotion to the spread of the gospel, *solely because he will not go for the Society* [All emph. his, JCB] (West, 2:49).

West said Franklin's new opposition "found the American Christian Missionary Society in 1866 badly in need of repairs and rapidly losing in popularity" (2:49). To repair the Society and counter its loss of popularity, it turned to the man whom West called, "its great apologist W.K. Pendleton, to defend it." Pendleton's apologia at the Society's convention in 1866 was a watershed event, opening the floodgate of errors that have inundated the church from then until now.

His argument was based on Thomas Campbell's motto, first enunciated in 1809: "Where the Bible speaks, we speak; where the Bible is silent, we are silent." Pendleton focused on the last phrase—"where the Bible is silent, we are silent"—and Moses Lard printed his full speech in the *Millennial Harbinger's* Nov., 1866 issue, in which Pendleton said, in part:

You say, 'your Missionary Society is not scriptural'—and you mean by this, that there is no special express precept in the Scriptures demanding it. We concede this without a moment's hesitation. There is none; but what do you make of it? Is everything which is not scriptural therefore wrong? ...Does he say that it is not *positively and expressly* commanded; then we demand by what canon of interpretation does he make mere *silence* prohibitory? [All Emph his, JCB] (501).

Pendleton used Scriptural **silence** to justify the Society and his interpretation of "Where the Bible is silent, we are silent" became the mantra of every innovator in the church from that time forward. Upon Pendleton's interpretation is based every unscriptural innovation adopted by mainstream churches. The floodgate was opened and human opinions in the guise of expedi-

ents became **another** source of authority in digressive mainstream churches.

To try to sweep back the avalanche by calling for divine authority was like trying to dry up the the ocean with a sponge. Pendleton's interpretation was picked up by Isaac Errett and the *Christian Standard* and then by J. H. Garrison and B. W. Johnson in the *Christian Evangelist* to resound down through the ages to the present. Nevertheless, an element remained to whom the call for divine authority still meant something (West, 2:54).

Pendleton's words still "resound down through the ages" as authority for the endless array of Social Gospel ministries in mainstream churches of Christ. Asked for divine authority for their ministries, they reply, "They are **expedients**. The Bible **doesn't** say we **can't** create them." There are probably few people in mainstream churches who ever heard of W.K. Pendleton but they are still riding his same old, tired, worn out, swaybacked nag called *Expediency*.

Typical of Pendleton's progeny is Lynn McMillon, president and CEO of *The Christian Chronicle*, and an elder in the mainstream Memorial Road church of Christ in Edmond, Okla. In a meeting with a large group of Gospel preachers at the 8th and Lee church building in Lawton, Okla., Nov. 17, 2003, McMillon represented Oklahoma Christian University (OCU). The meeting was requested by Oklahoma preachers to voice objections to rank liberals who were included on OCU's lectureship. Among those liberals were Mark Henderson of the apostate Quail Springs church in Oklahoma City and Randy Harris, co-author of *The Second Incarnation* with Rubel Shelly. Both Henderson and Harris consider the church a denomination and freely fellowship denominations.

It was pointed out to McMillon that Quail Springs uses mechanical instruments of music in its worship and he was asked point-blank—not once, but **three times**—if, "the silence of the Scriptures is permissive or prohibitive." He refused to answer the question. Had he truthfully done so, it would have ruined his defense of Quail Springs and Henderson.

Those of us to whom the call of divine authority still means something understand that Scriptural silence is **not** permissive and **we** can answer that question from God's word. Nadab and Abihu are prime examples in the Old Testament:

And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD. Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the LORD spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace (Lev. 10:1-3).

As priests under the Law of Moses, their responsibility was to offer incense by taking fire, putting it into their censers, and offering it "before the Lord." But the Scripture says they "offered **strange** fire." What was strange about it? It was fire that "God commanded them **not**." The significance of this passage is that God had commanded them to take fire from the source which **He** chose, but they chose one about which He was **silent**. In essence, they argued that, "God did **not** say we couldn't."

If that is not sufficient to explain the **prohibitive** nature of God's silence, the writer of Hebrews affirmed the superiority of Christ's priesthood over Aaron's, proving by God's **silence** that Christ could **not** have been a priest under the Law of Moses:

If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people re-

ceived the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood (Heb. 7:11-14).

Jesus Christ could not have been a priest while He was on earth—**not** because God said He **could not**, but because God commanded priests under the Law of Moses to be from the tribe of Levi. Christ was **prohibited** from being a priest on earth because, "...our Lord sprang out of Judah; of which tribe Moses spake **nothing** concerning priesthood."

God's **silence** concerning Judah and the priesthood did **not** permit a member of that tribe to be a priest. God's silence was **prohibitive** in the case of anyone other than a Levite serving as priest under the Law.

Directly related to Pendleton's "permissive silence" doctrine, is that **anything** churches devise falls under the classification of expediency and is, therefore, permitted. The Bible authorizes us to act in one of three ways—direct statement (command), approved divine example, and implication.

Direct statement ("Repent and be baptized...for the remission of sins") is evident. **Approved divine example** is illustrated in Acts 20:7 when Paul tarried at Troas to assemble with the church and observe the Lord's Supper. That is an approved apostolic example of assembling on the first day of each week to observe the Lord's Supper. **Implication** means that when Scripture implies an approved action it is accepted as approved by God.

That is seen in Philip's preaching to the Samaritans and the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8. In neither instance is it explicitly stated that he preached baptism to anyone. But it is **implied** when the Samaritans "believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women" (Acts 8:12), and when the eunuch said, "See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" (Acts 8:36).

Opposition to unauthorized programs, like so-called "ministries" in the work of the church, is often met with a stock reply: "The Bible does not authorize things like church buildings, pews, and song books, either." From whence comes this sophistry? From W.K. Pendleton who asked, "Is everything which is not scriptural therefore wrong? ...by what canon of interpretation does he make mere **silence** prohibitory?" They ignore the fact that buildings, pews, and song books are **not added elements** to the work or worship of the church, but are **implied** expedients in the commands to assemble in one place (1 Cor. 11:18, 33; Heb. 10:25), and to sing (Eph. 5:19). As such, they are **authorized** expedients. For a thing to be expedient, it must **first** be lawful (1 Cor. 6:12; 10:23) under one of those three sources of Bible authority.

Expediency plays an important role in the place where God designed for it to be. However, to say that the realm of human judgment (expediency) is *not* a *source* of New Testament authority is *not* within itself a denial of the importance and proper role of expediency. Having said that, it may be said emphatically that **expediency is not a fourth source of authority** (Grizzell).

Commenting on brother Grizzell's article, Kent Bailey and Charles Pogue wrote:

The logical consequence of the authority by expedience doctrine is enough to falsify it.

Basically all one has to do is engage in any activity that he desires and then justify it by claiming that such is an expedient to evangelism, edification, or benevolence. The sad reality in the denominational world at large is their whole religious existence is based on expediency which is another way of saying I am my own authority.

This is a post-modern world. This is where the idea of expediency as a source of authority will lead the church if those who hold it never admit to its implication and do not give the idea up (Ibid).

Neither the silence of Scripture nor expediency is Biblically authoritative. To claim expediency as a **source of authority**, is a false doctrine and as brother Grizzell wrote, “Any doctrine which implies a false doctrine is false within itself.” To say that **anything** man adds to the work and/or worship of the church is “an expedient” if it is not expressly forbidden is absolutely false and incurs the anathema of God (Gal. 1:6-9; Rev. 22:18-19).

Expediency as a source of authority for whatever mainstream churches may concoct and call *ministries*, is their hallmark and **that** identifies them as an apostate component of the newly emerging denomination.

Chapter Three

The Time Has Come—Again

It took about 50 years for the seeds of apostasy that were sown in the 19th century to come to fruition. The “progressivism” that began in the mid-1800s resulted in the American Christian Missionary Society and the introduction of mechanical instruments of music. It ended in full blown division when the Christian Church was officially recognized as a new denomination in 1906.

Through that period, progressive heretics added other practices into the work and worship of the church that had no New Testament authority. They were opposed by those faithful to the New Testament pattern and battles raged in periodicals, from pulpits, and on the polemic platform. Undaunted by Scripture, progressives adamantly clung to their pet theories and organizations until the rent caused by heresies issued in the recognition of a new denomination..

We are at the end of such an era today and the time has come **again**. We **are** two separate brotherhoods with little common ground. A vast majority of those claiming to be the church of Christ no longer bear its distinctive marks. Considering the nature of apostasy, that statement is **not** painting with a broad brush. There is no such animal as “a little apostasy.” When the first step **away** from God’s word is taken, that is one step **into** apostasy. Some are taking short steps while others have made giant leaps, but **all** are apostate. The remnant of the faithful must flee fellowship with mainstream churches as the faithful fled Jerusalem in AD 70. It is time for the faithful remnant to cease pretending we are one and “have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Eph. 5:11).

There are two Greek words translated *division/divisions* in the New Testament. The first is *schisma*, from which we get our English word, *schism*. *Schisma* is defined as, “Not yet formal cleavages into two or more organizations, but partisan divisions that showed in the love-feasts and at the Lord’s Supper” (A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures*, 1 Cor. 11:18, *eSword*). Strong says this word means, “a *split* or *gap* (“schism”), literally or figuratively: - division, rent, schism” (*eSword*). The image set forth by *schisma* is a rent or tear in a piece of fabric that is not yet separated into two pieces.

The second word translated *division* is *dichostasia*, meaning, “standings apart” (*Robertson’s Word Pictures*, Rom. 16:17, *eSword*). *Schisma* is the beginning of division, when a rent or tear is made in the whole, and *dichostasia* is the end result when the whole is separated into two distinct parts.

Division (*schisma*) originated in the minds of 19th century preachers and editors. West devoted an entire chapter to Isaac Errett, who was a leading light in that division.

Historians among the Disciples of Christ invariably look upon Errett as the one who saved the restoration movement from becoming ‘a fissiparous sect of jangling legalists.’ This group hails Errett as the prophet of spirituality and liberalism (West 2:23).

Errett, who edited *The Christian Standard*, was not only an early proponent of the Missionary Society, but when he moved to Detroit to work with the new Jefferson and Beaubian congregation in 1862 he did so at the behest of two men, Richard Hawley and Colin Campbell who, West says, “were the chief men in the new congregation, and were liberal in spirit and outlook” (*Ibid.*, 27). Errett’s liberalism was evident in a plaque he placed over his office door in Detroit.

“On it was engraved the words: ‘Rev. I. Errett’” (Ibid., 28).

A separate brotherhood began more than a half-century ago among those who believed they were “leading minds” to lead the church out of “legalism” into a “wiser, sweeter...apostolic spirit.” The same liberal spirit which marked the mainstream 150 years ago characterizes mainstream churches of Christ in our day. The necessity of another formal standing apart (*dichostasia*) was reached long ago and must be recognized. When Paul wrote, “I hear that there be divisions among you...” (1 Cor. 11:18) he used the word *schisma* and continued, saying that those divisions—rents, or tears in the body—would result in heresies. That word is *hairesis*, translated as *sect* (Acts 24:14).

Hairesis is used only twice by Paul, once in this passage and once in Galatians 5:20. Strong defines it as, “properly a *choice*, that is, (specifically) a *party* or (abstractly) *disunion*.” Robertson says, “The schisms naturally become factions or parties.”

Schisms produce sects and 19th century schism produced the Christian Church sect. In the same fashion, another sect is emerging from among us in the 21st century. It is not yet fully grown, nor do most people even recognize it, but its existence is fact. It is fueled by churches considering themselves mainstream who regard those of us still preaching the ancient gospel as “legalists.” Some are unabashedly liberal, having long ago departed from the faith, like Max Lucado’s church in San Antonio, Richland Hills in Ft. Worth, and Quail Springs in Oklahoma City. Other mainstream churches of Christ who call for diluting the truth under their euphemism of “balanced preaching” call the faithful “a toxic loyalty circle” and “vile...liars.”

There are thousands more churches and individuals like these who can be found in our own back yards. We can count on one hand the churches of Christ in our own area with whom we are in Biblical fellowship. That includes at least twelve in neighboring towns, and three in our own. All of them have sold out to the “sweet spirit” of J. S. Lamar, Isaac Errett, Barry Grider, Dave Miller, Keith Moser, and unnumbered others who once stood upon the Word of God.

This emerging sect’s leaders view Gospel papers and their editors who expose error as Lamar did faithful papers and editors of his day: “We can not read many of their productions without feeling that we are breathing an unwholesome religious atmosphere.” To mainstream churches, these papers and their editors, “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.”

This sect has no tolerance for plain Gospel preaching, or civil discourse. They are intent on restructuring the church after their own likeness and dragging as many as they can with them into the broad way leading to destruction. We who still love and respect the authority of God’s word must mark them, disassociate ourselves from them, and let the world know that we have no fellowship with them. The Lord said heresies will come, and they have. The time for recognizing division has come—again.

...universal, simultaneous apostasy and division did not (and cannot) occur in the church of Christ Thus the digression-driven division gradually occurred over the last half of the nineteenth century, church by church. The 1906 US census recognized the church-wide division. Those who drove this wedge of division were initially progressive brethren, but within a generation they had morphed into two distinct denominations (the Independent Christian Church and the Disciples of Christ)...A century after the foregoing digression was beginning (i.e. the 1960s), the cancer of liberalism again began eating at

the vitals of the Lord's body. Only those abysmally ignorant or blindly unrealistic will deny it. Liberals (many of them disgustingly elitist, impudent, and irreverent) have come out of their "closets" in droves in recent decades. Their aim has been/is so to blend the Lord's church with the denominations so as to make them and us undistinguishable... "Formal" division such as that of 1906 has not yet come from this Satanic rape of the bride of Christ, but it already exists in fact. The Lord's church will be better off when this deviation has run its full course and the division/apostasy is so complete that any deniers will appear dense or dishonest (McClish, Dub, *The Lighthouse*, weekly bulletin of Northpoint church of Christ, Denton, Texas, April 12, 2015).

Apostasy shakes out the dross and leaves a remnant. That was true in the Patriarchal Age, the Mosaic Age, and remains true today. It never suddenly recurs, but is gradual and imperceptible to those who are spiritually asleep and ignore history's pattern.

Heresies entertained 50 years ago have grown into false practices and teachings in that mainstream brotherhood sect. After basking for decades in Pendleton's Pharisaical tradition, most elderships of mainstream churches of Christ deny that false teaching even exists. They are blind to its reality and do not oppose it, lest they lose their mainstream status. Robert Graham described the same mindset of churches in 1869:

...there is among ourselves a falling off from the simplicity of the gospel, a conforming to the mode of *other* denominations, the loss of zeal for the spread of the gospel for fear people will think us solicitous only to build up a party, the decrease of Bible reading and study among us of late, the growing disposition to recognize the distinction of clergy and laity in our churches, and among much more that might be named, our conforming to the unscriptural phraseology of sects, to say nothing of our adopting many of their anti-scriptural customs. With the uniform experience of past ages before us, the tendency of men to make the gospel popular under the plea of extending its influence, and that, too, even at the cost of its purity and power to save, should make us keen to detect and fearless in our condemnation of all departures from the faith (West, 2:13).

When we consider Graham's analysis then, today's reality becomes clear: "The thing which hath been, it is that which shall be..." (Eccl. 1:9).

Apostasy **then** and **now** is paralleled in the following. While this is not an exhaustive list, it illustrates the repetition of 19th century apostasy in today's mainstream churches.

Apostasy Then

"There is among ourselves a falling off from the **simplicity** of the gospel, ...our conforming to the unscriptural phraseology of sects." Paul told the Corinthians, "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ"(2 Cor. 11:3). The gospel message is simple and complete, revealing God's will in words which the Holy Spirit gave to inspired men (1 Cor. 2:1-13; 2 Pet. 1:20-21). It needs no additional language, nor can it be clearly and adequately expressed in a modern language of Ashdod ("conforming to the phraseology of the sects").

The phrase, *language of Ashdod*, comes from Nehemiah's reforms in Jerusalem following the Jews' return from captivity. He observed that many of them had intermarried with heathen women who dwelt in the land—one of the very things that led to their captivity more than a century earlier. "In those days also saw I Jews *that* had married wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, *and* of Moab: And their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the

Jews' language, but according to the language of each people" (Neh. 13:23-24).

Unique speech has distinguished God's people in every dispensation. That is no less true of the present age. When the Christian's language is "half in the speech of Ashdod" (denominations) it betrays a heart attuned to the siren song of sectarianism. Words reveal the contents of the heart. (Matt. 12:34-37). Peter enjoined, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" (1 Pet. 4:11). Words are vehicles of thought. They are the basic component of language and have meaning with such precision that the Holy Spirit differentiated between the plural and singular (Gal. 3:16).

Denominational terms constitute a modern language of Ashdod that reveal doctrinally corrupted hearts. That was Isaac Errett's problem in 1863:

...while in Detroit, Errett secured a name-plate to put over the office door. On it was engraved the words: 'Rev. I. Errett.' At this early stage in the restoration movement it was enough to shock the brotherhood, This was looked upon by many as a definite departure from apostolic principles, Neither Jesus nor His apostles, nor an evangelist in primitive times set himself aside by this 'popish' designation. The very fact that Errett selected such a designation as 'Reverend' indicated to many that he had a closer affinity to Rome than to ancient Jerusalem. (West, 2:28).

Errett's name-plate demonstrated "the growing disposition to recognize the distinction of clergy and laity," and "...our conforming to the unscriptural phraseology of sects, to say nothing of our adopting many of their anti-scriptural customs."

Errett spoke the language of Ashdod. The scheme of redemption, the church, its organization, work, and worship are expressed in simple terms in the New Testament. Mainstream churches of Christ have traded that simplicity for heretical practices expressed in Ashdodic language.

Apostasy Now

The single mission of the church was given by Jesus in Matthew 28:18-20 and Mark 16:15-16 and it was carried out by the first century church (Acts 8:4ff; 11:19-21). Compare Jesus' simple statement to "go ye into all the world and preach the gospel" with the Ashdodic terminology from the website of the church in Kingfisher, Okla. Under the heading of *Our Current Mission*, the following statement is repeated in various terms on numerous websites of mainstream churches of Christ:

We strive to bring glory to God by equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God (Ephesians 4:12-13). Therefore, we believe we are called to make disciples of Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:18-20).

Kingfisher's statement not only changes the mission Jesus gave the church, but teaches false doctrine as well. Ephesians 4:12-13 has no reference to the mission of the church. It refers to miraculous gifts bestowed by Christ after His ascension (Eph. 4:8) for the completion of divine revelation. There is no mention of, "equipping of the saints for the work of service" in those verses: "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4:12-13).

These verses describe the purpose and duration of miraculous gifts then extant (Eph. 4:8-11). Their purpose was to perfect the saints for the work of the ministry, and to edify the body of

Christ (Eph. 4:12). Their duration was “till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a **perfect man**.” The word *till* expresses their point of termination. That point was the completion of divine revelation and “a perfect man” referred to “that which is perfect” (1 Cor. 13:10), or what Jude called “...the faith once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3).

“Equipping of the saints for the work of service” was **never** the mission of the church in the New Testament, and is certainly not “Our Current Mission.” This is “a falling off from the simplicity of the gospel” which simplicity can be succinctly stated as, “Our Current Mission is to preach the gospel to save the lost” (Mark 16:15-16).

The Second and Adams church in Elk City, Okla. is another example of a mainstream church speaking the language of Ashdod. In 1996, that church mass mailed a brochure to city residents that was filled with Ashdodic ambiguities. Under the headings of *Our Heritage*, *Our Building*, *Our Fellowship*, *Our Preachers*, *Our People*, and *Our Pastors*, the brochure attempted to explain to visitors what to “expect when you honor us with a visit.” Under *Our Heritage*, they wrote:

We are a part of the Restoration Movement. Our desire is to restore the New Testament church in our day. We have studied hard to find out what the church was like in the beginning and to pattern ourselves after that. We believe this is the worthiest of goals. We want very much to be a Bible centered church. To us, the Bible is the sole authority in all religious matters. Our conclusions aren't flawless. That is why we say 'In essentials—unity. In opinions—liberty. In all things—love.'

The church Jesus built is **not** “part of the Restoration Movement,” nor is that its heritage. The Disciples of Christ and the Independent Christian Church also claim they are a part of the Restoration Movement. Which part is Second and Adams?

The church of Christ springs from the seed of the kingdom (Luke 8:11), not a **part** of some movement. It is that spiritual body which Jesus promised to build (Matt. 16:18), for which He died (Acts 20:28), over which He is Head (Eph. 1:22-23), to which the obedient are added (Acts 2:47), and which He saves (Eph. 5:23).

“Our desire is to restore the New Testament church in our day” implies that the church has not been restored.

The very idea of a ‘movement’ involves that one has not yet arrived at his desired destination...A movement is designed to get us someplace...Now, when one tacks the word ‘restoration’ onto the beginning of the word ‘movement,’ obtaining the phrase ‘restoration movement,’ we get this concept: not yet having arrived at restoration...Once we have restored the church, the movement to the church is finished. Thus, we are no longer in a movement to restore the church, but we are in the church which has been restored. God is not going to save a movement toward restoration. God is going to save those who have been restored; God is going to save the church...I want to be a member of that which has been restored, the Lord's body, his church. I will teach what the Bible teaches; I will be a part of the church for which the Lord died and shed his blood, and I will reject what these so-called scholars are calling the ‘restoration movement.’ Really, it takes only one generation to fully restore the church. Once that restoration process is complete, the movement has ended. (Cauley, 5).

Second and Adams was a bit late, but it finally caught up with Logan J. Fox and his skewed view of the church's "heritage" in 1969:

The Church of Christ is a historical movement. It is one branch of the Restoration Movement, a nineteenth century reform movement in America associated largely with the names of Thomas and Alexander Campbell. The original movement was conceived as being a part of Protestantism and must be classed with other 'free church' movements. One branch of this movement likes to think of itself as being the main Campbellian stream while the others are 'digressive.' (28, 29).

When I pointed out the brochure's errors to one of their elders, he admitted that it was not intended to draw men to Christ. He said, "It was for public relations." The aim of public relations is to inform the public, prospective customers, investors, partners, employees, and other stakeholders and ultimately persuade them to maintain a positive or favorable view about the organization (Wikipedia).

The gospel of Christ—not public relations—draws men to God (John 6:44-45; Rom. 1:16-17). Nor is it the church's mission to "persuade them to maintain a positive or favorable view about the organization." If Jesus had been better at public relations, perhaps He could have maintained "a positive or favorable view" of Himself and avoided the wrath of those who crucified Him.

Second and Adams is an example of mainstream churches of Christ substituting the language of Ashdod for the simplicity that is in Christ.

Another church in Elk City, Okla. that echoes Fox's view is the Pioneer and Bell church of Christ. On their website, they say, "The churches of Christ are the result of the Restoration Movements that took place in the 1800s here in the United States," to which they subjoin the subjective statement that, "The New Testament is considered to be the pattern for the work and worship of the church in the twenty first century as it was for the first century" (www.thelordsway.com/pioneer).

The church was established by Jesus Christ on Pentecost day following His resurrection (Acts 2:1ff), not "here in the United States," and the New Testament is "the pattern for the work and worship of the church in the twenty first century," regardless of whether it is "considered to be" by men.

Apostasy Then

When he wrote, "... a conforming to the mode of *other* denominations," Graham italicized *other*, indicating that those of whom he wrote considered the church a denomination—among whom Isaac Errett was prominent.

Errett moved to Detroit in 1863 to preach for a new congregation in which two liberal men, Colin Campbell and Richard Hawley, were chief. His association with them facilitated his goal of changing the church into a denomination:

...while Errett was in Detroit, his liberal attitude appeared. Errett had been laying the ground-work for the one-man pastor system in the *Millennial Harbinger*. He carefully, however, avoided dissension. The articles were conducted in the form of a dialogue, with "Eusebius" suggesting the ideas Errett wanted to put across. But, soon after taking up the work with the church in Detroit, Errett published what he called 'A Synopsis of The Faith And Practice of The Church of Christ.' The 'Synopsis' consisted of ten arti-

cles setting forth the faith and practice of the church, in addition to a series of by-laws, emphasizing the regulations of the order and business of the church. Most brethren felt that the ‘Synopsis’ amounted to a creed (West, 2:27, 28).

Apostasy Now

“... a conforming to the mode of *other* denominations.” Creeds like Errett’s still infest the church. They are posted on websites of mainstream churches of Christ in the guise of “What We Believe.” Their number is legion across the land, but a sampling of some in our state illustrates this. They are, the Tamarack Road church, Altus, Okla.; the Adams Blvd. church, Bartlesville, Okla.; the Glenpool church, Glenpool, Okla.; the Quail Springs church, Okla. City, Okla.; the Owasso church, Owasso, Okla.; and the Northridge church, Shawnee, Okla. All would be considered mainstream churches of Christ by the general public and all display creeds on their websites under such headings as, *What We Believe*, *Beliefs*, *Statements of Beliefs From The Elders*, or *Statement of Faith*.

A desire to be like all the nations (1 Sam. 8:20) ruined Israel, and that desire has been incubating for decades in mainstream churches of Christ. Fifty three years ago, Logan J. Fox wrote:

By the mercy of God we are Christians, but we are Christians of a particular persuasion and a particular history. In other words, all our protestations to the contrary notwithstanding, *we are a denomination* (Emph. his). We should confess it and join all other denominational Christians in asking God’s forgiveness and his guidance (“Destiny Or Disease?”, *Voices of Concern*, Mission Messenger, St. Louis, 1966, ed. Robert Meyers).

Mainstream churches of Christ are the heirs, tools, and fellow travelers—or as the Soviets termed Communist sympathizers, “Useful Idiots”—of Fox’s heresy that are morphing into another denomination. One of their distinguishing marks is “... the loss of zeal for the spread of the gospel for fear people will think us solicitous only to build up a party”.

A steady decline from simple gospel preaching in the last few decades has given way to a corresponding increase in such things as “Marriage Seminars,” “Ladies’ Days,” “Financial Seminars,” “Preaching Conferences,” “Youth Rallies,” “Softball Leagues,” “Secret Sister Luncheons,” “Youth Retreats,” “Easter Egg Hunts,” “Men’s Prayer and Coffee” meetings, “Card Ministries,” “Trunk-or-Treat,” “Youth Retreats,” “Ladies Night of Fun,” “Wednesday Night Meals,” “Family Devos,” “Coffee Fellowship” at the building on Sunday morning, “Divorce Support Care,” “Women’s Ministries,” Fitness Ministry,” and much more.

The above “ministries”—all gleaned from websites and bulletins of mainstream churches of Christ—indicate a closer affinity to the denominational world than “to ancient Jerusalem.” Through these “ministries,” they are able remain active in their communities but avoid adverse reactions from *other* denominations who consider plain Gospel preaching an attempt to “build up a party.”

After more than 150 years, Pendleton’s **expedients** are in full bloom as “authority” in mainstream churches. The aroma rising from the strange fire of their **ministries** is **not** a sweet savor to God. All that remains is for them to amalgamate with other sects like Rick Atchley’s Richland Hills in Ft. Worth, Max Lucado’s Oak Hills Church in San Antonio, and Oklahoma City’s Quail Springs church and be honest enough to call themselves another denomination. That may not come within my lifetime but history says it is inevitable.

Chapter Four

The Creeds Of Mainstream Churches

For 2,000 years, the church has suffered unrelenting assault by Satan's agents—the most effective of whom have always been those within. Paul warned the Ephesian elders that after his departure "...shall grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:29-30).

From his day to ours, the history of the church illustrates the truth of his inspired warning. Like Judas, grievous wolves who feign love for Christ while betraying Him populate and control today's mainstream churches. They write His name on their meeting house signs, but ignore His authority for what they teach and practice. They project an image to the sectarian world, saying, "Look at us. We are the Church of Christ and respectable like all of you." And the world believes them.

West described the same philosophy that prevailed among liberal, "leading minds" in the 19th century:

There are always those who believe they sense something in the "spirit" of a thing contrary to what may be found in its "letter"...The church appeared to them to be too narrow and restricted, and their ambition was therefore to lift the brotherhood to a "dignified church" in a world of denominationalism, commanding at least some respect from these religious bodies (2:250).

Mark Henderson believes the church is "too narrow and restricted" and expressed that in a speech at Abilene Christian University 23 years ago:

Brothers and sisters, we don't have to live in estrangement and isolation from those who honestly differ with us inside or outside our fellowship. We don't have to agree with them at every point, nor do we have to convince them to agree with us on every issue. All we have to do is look to our left, to those who have felt the sting of our rejection, and everywhere we see one who has surrendered his or her life to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, we may rejoice that we have discovered a brother or sister, and we may extend to that child of God the same inviting hand of grace and acceptance that we ourselves have received from the Lord Jesus. It won't be easy to do that. It is hard to lay aside the mantle of exclusivity, but I believe it will be worth the effort, if for no other reason, than for the sake of those lost souls who won't ever find Jesus unless they find him through the unity-committed church (*The Unity Committed Church*, Feb. 19, 1996).

The mainstream's desire to be "like all the nations" is as repugnant to the Lord today as Israel's was (1 Sam. 8:20) and presages the rise of **another** denomination from among them.

One of the heresies leading to that new denomination in the 19th century was a written creed. Under the euphemism of a *Synopsis*, Isaac Errett wrote his creed for churches of Christ in 1863.

Errett published what he called 'A Synopsis of The Faith And Practice of The Church of Christ.' the 'Synopsis' consisted of ten articles setting forth the faith and practice of the church, in addition to a series of by-laws, emphasizing the regulations of the order and business of the church, Most brethren felt that the 'Synopsis' amounted to a creed. (West, 2:28).

The ten articles of Errett's synopsis were reprinted in *Lard's Quarterly* in the September, 1863 issue:

For the information of the public, the following statement of faith and practice is put forth by the Church of Christ meeting at the corner of Jefferson Avenue and Beaubien street, in the city of Detroit.

I. We accept the Bible—Old and New Testaments—as the word of God; as furnishing the only certain and sufficient knowledge of God, of Salvation, of Duty and of Destiny: so that we need no other basis of faith, guide to duty, or bond of union, than is therein contained. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. 2d TIM. III. 16, 17.

II. While eschewing the metaphysical distinctions and technicalities of philosophies and creeds, on the subject of the Trinity, as being fruitful sources of confusion and strife among Christians, we recognize the tri-unity of the Godhead in the teachings of the New Testament, and accept, in the fullest sense; as a matter of revelation, and not of philosophy; of faith, and not of speculation, every Bible utterance concerning Father, Son and Holy Spirit. MATT. XI. 27: JOHN I. 1-5, 14: JOHN XIV. 16, 17; xvi. 7-15: MATT. XXVIII. 19.

III. We regard the Divinity of the Lord Jesus, as emphatically the Christian creed—the truth to be believed; out of which, when believed, flows salvation to the sinner; out of which also, spring the obligations, enjoyments, and hopes of spiritual life. Hence, in laboring for the conversion of sinners, this is the great theme; and in accepting converts to baptism, the only confession of faith to which they are required to assent is, That Jesus is the Son of God, and the Anointed Prophet, Priest and King, through whom we are to obtain “wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.” MATT. XVI. 15-20; 1st. COR. III. 11; EPH. II, 19-22; JOHN XX. 31; ACTS. VIII. 35-38; 1st. JOHN V. 1.

IV. Not only do we accept as facts, the death of Christ as a sin offering, and his resurrection from the dead; but we regard these mighty facts as constituting the very Gospel by which we are saved. 1st. COR. XV. 1-4. Facts, Precepts, Promises, comprise the Gospel scheme. Jesus, the Divine Saviour, is the center of all these. The facts concerning Jesus, believed; the commandments of Jesus, obeyed; the promises of Jesus, enjoyed; these constitute the essentials of the Christian religion—the marrow and fatness of the Gospel feast.

V. Faith and repentance are the indispensable prerequisites of baptism. An entire reliance on Jesus as a crucified and risen Saviour, joined with such a sorrow for sin as shall lead the heart and life away from wickedness, to the service of the Lord, is enjoined on, and required of every person seeking admission to baptism and church membership.

VI. To such a believing penitent, baptism is “for the remission of sins;” not as procuring or meriting pardon, nor yet as accomplishing spiritual regeneration; but as bringing the believer into contact with Gospel promises, and conveying to him a scriptural assurance of forgiveness. Hence we teach every person coming to baptism, to trust implicitly the Saviour's promise—”He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” MARK. XVI. 15, 16.

VII. In baptism, the believer is immersed “in the name,” or by the authority of the Lord Jesus, “into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit;” and thus enters into covenant relationship with God as his Father, with Jesus as his Saviour, and with the Holy Spirit as his Comforter. Being buried with Jesus by baptism into death, and rising to walk in a new life, he is entitled to the promises of the Gospel, and is under the most solemn covenant obligations to walk in all the commandments of the Lord. Presuming not to judge those who have honestly mistaken sprinkling or pouring for baptism, but who show in their lives a cheerful conformity to all the known will of God, we nevertheless feel bound to maintain the integrity of this ordinance, First—because we dare not interfere with divine appointments, to change either their form or their design; and, Secondly— because we see in immersion, which all admit, and not in sprinkling or pouring, which but a part accept, a possibility of ending controversy and promoting union among the people of God. We do not wish, however, to place any obstacle in the way of any of the children of God who may desire to partake with us of the Lord’s Supper, or to share in any of the privileges of Christian worship...

VIII. Being desirous of returning, as fully as possible, to the purity and simplicity of Primitive Christianity, we have been led, from a careful examination of the Scriptures, to the following conclusions: 1. The first church of Christ was planted in Jerusalem, on the Pentecost succeeding the resurrection of the Messiah. See Acts II. in extenso. 2. Its converts were accepted to baptism and church membership, on their faith in Christ, and repentance toward God—and not upon subscription to any human-creed or articles of faith. 3. “They that gladly received the word were baptized;” no infant membership) was recognized. 4. “ They continued steadfastly in the Apostles’ teaching and fellowship, in breaking of bread and in prayers.” ACTS II. 42. In the teaching of the Apostles, therefore, as found in Acts and in the Epistles, are Christians to find an authoritative utterance of the will of God. 5. From the apostolic teaching We learn: That all the baptized believers dwelling in one locality, constituted the church in that locality. That every church when organized- by an Apostle or Evangelist, was an independent community, so far as its own affairs were concerned, with a government of its own; dependent on and amenable to other churches only so far as the sentiments of Christian brotherhood, or the demands of weakness or poverty, might allow of a mutual claim for counsel and co-operation. That every church, when fully organized, had a Bishop and Pastor, and frequently a plurality of Bishops, to preside over its spiritual interests; and Deacons, who attended to the wants of the poor, and the temporal interests of the church, and assisted likewise in its spiritual ministrations. That the churches met on the first day of the week for prayer, praise, in-caching, teaching, exhortation, observance of the Lord’s Supper, contributions for benevolent purposes, and the cultivation of brotherly love. That as soon as the ability of a church or of neighboring churches allowed of it, Evangelists or Missionaries, duly qualified and approved, were sent forth to preach the Gospel in other regions, foster infant churches, and oversee them until organized. That in accomplishing all these functions, the churches had nothing but apostolic teachings to guide them, in all matters of expediency outside of apostolic teaching, every church acting on its own responsibility. That human leaderships, sects and parties were discouraged and denounced as anti-Christian. That on this simple basis of the Lordship of Christ and apostolic authority, it was sought to unite in one brotherhood, all who received Jesus as their Saviour and King. We seek to return to this standard of the Apos-

ties' doctrine. In this age of division and distraction, we esteem it our especial duty to call Christians from the confusions of the apostasy to the order and harmony of the primitive church; from human creeds and philosophies to the Bible; from party to Christ; from denominational names and interests, to the symmetry and perfection of the Body of Christ; from speculative theology, which divides, to the faith and love of Christ, which unite; from all that tends to alienation and party-ism, to the unity and unity which apostolic teachings present. There is one Body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. Eph. iv. 4-6.

IX. To sum up all in one paragraph: Christ Jesus is our all; without his Light and Love, we perish forever. His Divinity is our foundation; His life our example; His death our salvation; His resurrection our hope; His intercession our foundation of grace and mercy; His teachings our guide; His church our school; His Spirit our comforter; His gospel our reliance for the conversion of sinners; His commandments our life; His promises our rejoicing; so that through faith and obedience, we may be blessed with "all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." To trust in the Lord Jesus, to love and obey Him—this is salvation here, and life eternal hereafter.

X. This declaration of our faith and aims is not to be taken as a creed. We assume no right to bind the conscience with any stereotyped formula. Vital religion is a thing of growth in the heart of the individual Christian. We design a mere statement, for general information, of the purpose which have induced us to band together, and the principles we propose to develop. We have no sectarian shackles with which to bind Christ's freemen— no spiritual prison-house for the confinement of the soul. We present no authoritative standard of interpretation of the Bible. The Spirit that indited the word, can best bring home to the heart the significance of its truths. The practice of the divine precepts, furnishes the best interpretation. We repudiate all human authority in spiritual concerns—MATT. XXIII. 8-12. JOHN VII. 16, 17. May the God of grace and truth bless the reading of these pages, that they may assist in giving consistent views of the Gospel to the human inquirer, as well as in dissipating the prejudices of Christians; so that the former may be led to accept the salvation of God, and the latter be encouraged to seek after the simplicity of faith and unity of spirit, which belonged to the church of Christ before sects disturbed her harmony, or treacherous hands rent her seamless garment.

In the same issue, Lard dissected Errett's "Synopsis" and exposed it as the sectarian creed it was:

THERE is not a sound man in our ranks who has seen the preceding "Synopsis" that has not felt scandalized by it. I wish we possessed even one decent apology for its appearance. It is a deep offense against the brotherhood—an offense tossed into the teeth of a people who, for forty years, have been working against the divisive and evil tendency of creeds. That it was meant as an offense by the brethren who have issued it, I cannot think. Still their work has a merit of its own, a merit which no lack of bad intention on their part can affect. Our brethren will accept this "Synopsis" for what it is, not for what it may possibly not have been designed to be. We are told that this "declaration" is not to be taken as a creed. But will this caveat prevent it being so taken? Never. When Aaron's calf came out had he called it a bird, still all Israel seeing it stand on four legs,

with horns and parted hoofs, would have shouted a calf, a calf, a calf. The brethren “meeting at the Corner of Jefferson Avenue and Beaubien Street, Detroit,” may call their work in classic phrase a “Synopsis,” or gently, a “declaration;” but we still cry a creed, a creed. It is not the mere title of a work that constitutes it a creed, but its matter and form, together with the manner in which it is issued and the sanctions by which it is accompanied. This “Synopsis” is a creed without the appropriate label—a genuine snake in the grass, wearing a honeyed name.

Varied forms of creeds are found on websites of mainstream churches of Christ, listed under such headings as *Beliefs*, *What We Believe*, etc. Compare theirs with Errett’s:

Errett’s “Synopsis” I. We accept the Bible—Old and New Testaments—as the word of God; as furnishing the only certain and sufficient knowledge of God, of Salvation, of Duty and of Destiny: so that we need no other basis of faith, guide to duty, or bond of union, than is therein contained. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. 2d TIM. III. 16, 17.

Faith We hold the Bible to be God’s inspired word. (2 Timothy 3:16) (Elm and Hudson church, Altus, Okla.).

What We Believe ...the Bible is the inspired word of God - a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path (2 Timothy 3:16; Psalm 119:105) (Lakehoma church, Mustang, Okla.).

What We Believe We believe the Bible is the inspired word of God. We are confident God inspired the individuals that wrote each book of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation (Edmond, Okla. Church).

Our Beliefs We believe in the divine inspiration and authority of the Bible in matters of life, worship and godliness. 2 Peter 1:3 (Northridge church, Shawnee, Okla.).

What We Believe The Bible, in its original form and documents, is the only inspired, infallible and authoritative Word of God, a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path. (2 Timothy 3:16, Psalms 119:105) (Adams Blvd. church, Bartlesville, Okla.).

Our Beliefs We believe in the inspiration and authority of the Bible in matters of life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3) (North MacArthur Blvd. Church, Okla. City, Okla.).

Errett’s “Synopsis” II. While eschewing the metaphysical distinctions and technicalities of philosophies and creeds, on the subject of the Trinity, as being fruitful sources of confusion and strife among Christians, we recognize the tri-unity of the Godhead in the teachings of the New Testament, and accept, in the fullest sense; as a matter of revelation, and not of philosophy; of faith, and not of speculation, every Bible utterance concerning Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

What We Believe We believe in the one God revealed in the Bible. We believe the one God is made up of the three beings known as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (The Edmond, Okla. church).

Statement Of Faith There is one God, eternally existing in three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Romans 8 & Ephesians 1:13-14 (Tamarack Road church, Altus, Okla.).

What We Believe There is one true and eternal God, the creator of the heavens and the earth, existing in three persons: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. (John 1:1-5, Ephesians 4:4-6) (Adams Blvd. Church, Bartlesville, Okla.).

What We Believe We believe that there is one God, the creator, sustainer, and ruler of the universe. He has always existed in three personalities—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Matthew 28:19, 2 Corinthians 13:14 (The South Yukon church of Christ, Yukon, Okla.).

Our Beliefs There is one eternal being who is God, who exists eternally in three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (The Bypass church of Christ, Idabel, Okla.).

Errett's "Synopsis" VII. "In baptism, the believer is immersed "in the name," or by the authority of the Lord Jesus, "into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit;" and thus enters into covenant relationship with God as his Father, with Jesus as his Saviour, and with **the Holy Spirit as his Comforter...** (Emph JCB)

Errett's "Synopsis" IX. "...His Divinity is our foundation; His life our example; His death our salvation; His resurrection our hope; His intercession our foundation of grace and mercy; His teachings our guide; His church our school; **His Spirit our comforter...** (Emph JCB)

Errett's Holy Spirit creed presaged Pat Boone's error by about 100 years. Pentecostalism has become a hallmark of mainstream churches of Christ. They lift passages relating to miraculous gifts from their contexts and misapply them to individuals today. Consider that practice in the following examples from their website creeds:

The Holy Spirit provides the Christian with understanding of spiritual truth and guidance in doing what is right. Romans 8:26-27; 1 Corinthians 2:12; Galatians 5:22-26 (Alameda church of Christ, Norman, Okla.).

We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit, whose indwelling at baptism enables Christians to lead a godly life. (John 16:4-16; Romans 8:9-26; Acts 2:38-39; 2 Corinth. 3:17-18; Ephesians 3:20-21) (Grace Crossing [A Community Church of Christ], Conroe, Texas).

The church is the body of Christ on earth, empowered by the Holy Spirit to continue the task of seeking and saving the lost and discipling the saved. (Ephesians 4:1-16) (Adams Blvd. church of Christ, Bartlesville, Okla.).

We believe that belief, repentance, confession of the identity of Christ, and immersion (baptism) for the forgiveness of sins and to receive the Holy Spirit as a gift, are essential for salvation. Acts 2:38 (Northridge church of Christ, Shawnee, Okla.).

We Believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life. The Holy Spirit also empowers believers for service and seals them unto the day of redemption (Wilbarger Street church of Christ, Vernon, Texas).

The Church is the Body of Christ on earth, is empowered by the Holy Spirit, and exists to save the lost and edify the saved (Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:22; 3:10-11; 4:12,16; 5:23; Colossians 1:18; Jude 20-23). (Lakehoma church of Christ, Mustang, Okla.).

We believe as a baptized believer that the Holy Spirit comes alongside and lives in the heart of the believer and provides comfort, strength, and direction to live the Christian life (John 14:16-17, John 15:26; Ephesians 1:13) (New Life church of Christ, St. Louis, Mo.).

Today, he is involved in the spiritual formation of every person when he baptizes us in the waters of baptism (Acts 19:1-6; 1 Corinthians 12:13). Jesus sent him to live inside

every baptized believer so that we can become sons and daughters of God (John 14:16). The Holy Spirit now comforts us in our times of distress and weakness. He intercedes for us before the Father in our inadequate prayers (Romans 8:14-17, 26-27). He searches our hearts and knows our every thought (1 Corinthians 2:10). He convicts us to live righteous lives, exposes the sin of the world and serves as a reminder of the coming judgment (John 16:7-11) (Faith Village church of Christ, Wichita Falls, Texas).

Consider their corruption of Scripture relating to the Holy Spirit's work:

The Alameda church teaches Calvinistic error in its claim that "The Holy Spirit provides the Christian with understanding of spiritual truth and guidance in doing what is right." Paul said, "...when ye *read*, ye may understand..." (Eph. 3:4), **not**, "when ye have the Holy Spirit."

Grace Crossing (A Community Church of Christ) teaches, "...the present ministry of the Holy Spirit, whose indwelling at baptism enables Christians to lead a godly life." This teaches the Calvinistic error of the "enabling of the Holy Spirit" in the Christian.

The Adams Blvd. church says, the church is "empowered by the Holy Spirit to continue the task of seeking and saving the lost and discipling the saved" and use Ephesians 4:1-16 to "prove" their assertion—a passage that relates to the miraculous.

The Northridge church says, "We believe that belief, repentance, confession of the identity of Christ, and immersion (baptism) for the forgiveness of sins and to receive the Holy Spirit as a gift, are essential for salvation. Acts 2:38." No one receives "the Holy Spirit as a gift." That is not the construction of Peter's words in Acts 2:38. The phrase, "the gift of the Holy Spirit" is used only twice in the New Testament (Acts 2:38; Acts 10:45) and in both places it refers to the miraculous.

The Faith Village church in Wichita Falls, Texas claims that the Holy Spirit "...is involved in the spiritual formation of every person when he baptizes us in the waters of baptism (Acts 19:1-6; 1 Cor. 12:13). Jesus sent him to live inside every baptized believer so that we can become sons and daughters of God (John 14:16)." Their eclectic scrambling of Bible passages typifies mainstream churches. Observe Faith Village's misuse of the above Scriptures to "prove" their assertions:

1. Acts 19:1-6 is the account of 12 men at Ephesus who had been baptized with John's baptism **after** John's order ended at Pentecost. Paul then baptized them under the baptism of the Great Commission, after which he laid hands on them and imparted miraculous gifts of tongues and prophecy. They were **not** baptized by the Holy Spirit "in the waters of baptism." Faith Village implies that Holy Spirit baptism included not only the power that came upon the apostles (Acts 2:1-4), but in every person's immersion for the remission of sins. This is a near regurgitation of Mac Deaver's doctrine that says a person who baptized in water is at the same time baptized by the Holy Spirit.

2. First Corinthians 12:13 refers to the agent of baptism, not the element:

It is sometimes insisted that 1 Corinthians 12:13, "For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body," makes the baptism of the Holy Spirit general. But the preposition *by* expresses the agency, not the element of the baptism of this verse. The agent of baptism cannot also be the element, and the Spirit, through the teaching of the Spirit, was the agent of the baptism. The passage is this: By one Spirit (the teaching) are we all baptized (immersed in water) into one body (the church) . . . and have all been made to

drink into (participate in the blessings of) one Spirit.” There is no Holy Spirit baptism in this or any other passage referring to others than the apostles of Christ (Wallace, *Mission and Medium*, 102).

3. John 14:16 has not a single syllable indicating that Jesus sent the Holy Spirit “to live inside every baptized believer so that we can become sons and daughters of God.” Read it for yourself: “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you for ever.” We “become sons and daughters of God” by **baptism into Christ** (Gal. 3:26-27).

Faith Village teaches Pentecostal doctrine. John 14:16 is in the context of Jesus’ final words to His **apostles** before He was crucified, in which He promised **them** the Holy Spirit to guide **them** into all truth (John 14:25-26; 16:12-15). To ignore the context of Bible verses and apply them to something God never intended is not only a mark of apostates. It is rank dishonesty and fatal false doctrine.

The Wilbarger Street church also teaches the Calvinistic “enabling of the Holy Spirit” of believers in order “to live a godly life.” That was **never** a function of the Holy Spirit in the apostolic age or any other. Had that been the case, Peter would not have sinned at Antioch (Gal. 2:11-16). Wilbarger Street further claims that we are “sealed” by the Holy Spirit—a **miraculous work** of the Spirit in the first century that confirmed the veracity of inspired preaching.

The Lakehoma church says the church “is empowered by the Holy Spirit, and exists to save the lost and edify the saved” and uses Ephesians 4:12, 16 as “proof”—again, a reference to miraculous gifts of the first century.

The New Life Church of Christ says, “the Holy Spirit comes alongside and lives in the heart of the believer and provides comfort, strength, and direction to live the Christian life.” Their “proof” of this assertion are passages relating to the Holy Spirit’s miraculous revelation of all truth in the **apostles** as **their** Comforter.

Of particular note is Errett’s reference to the Holy Spirit as “our comforter” in “Synopses” VII and IX—an error adopted by apostate churches. There is not a person alive today in whom the Holy Spirit functions as Comforter, nor were there any others in the first century except the apostles. In His final discourse to His apostles on the night He was betrayed, the Lord promised the Comforter to **them**.

And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; *Even* the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you...But the Comforter, *which is* the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you... But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning...Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you...Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come (John 14:16-17, 26; 15:26-27; 16:7, 13).

The word *Comforter* is used only five times in the New Testament and **only** in the above pas-

sages. It describes the miraculous work of the Holy Spirit in the apostles when they received power from the Holy Spirit on Pentecost (Acts 2). The Greek word (*parakletos*) from which it is translated is rendered *advocate* in 1 John 2:1 where it refers to Jesus Christ as the Christian's advocate with the Father. To claim that the Holy Spirit is our Comforter today is Pentecostalism.

The published creeds of mainstream churches have a commonality. They generally begin with, *We Believe*. There was never an apostle or gospel preacher in the New Testament who prefaced his teaching with "We believe." What **we** believe may be true or false. What men **believe** does not constitute Bible authority. What **Paul** believed was absolutely wrong. "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth" (Acts 26:9). The written creed of the Methodist church, the *Methodist Discipline* says **we believe**. "Dearly Beloved Brethren: It is our privilege and duty to recommend most earnestly this volume to you, which contains the Doctrines and Discipline of our Church, which we believe are agreeable to the Word of God..." (*Discipline*, 3).

Isaac Errett's creed said:

...the following statement of faith and practice is put forth by the Church of Christ... **We accept** the Bible... **We regard** the Divinity of the Lord... **we regard** these mighty facts as constituting the very Gospel... **we have been led**, from a careful examination of the Scriptures... We seek to return to this standard...

His statement of faith and practice differed nothing from denominational creeds. For man to **accept, regard** or be **led to believe** any doctrine does **not** establish its truth. Titanic passengers in 1912 accepted, regarded, and were led to believe that the Titanic was unsinkable. Truth is not dependent upon man's belief of it. The New Testament is the Lord's divine creed and is absolute, objective Truth whether anyone accepts, regards, or is led to believe it is such.

Mainstream churches differ nothing from *other* denominations with their published creeds. This comes from the Edmond, Okla. church of Christ's website:

The Bible is God's Word

We believe the Bible is the inspired word of God. **We are confident** God inspired the individuals that wrote each book...

The Body of Christ

We believe the church is made up of God's people on earth. Jesus is our head, and we are His body (Gal. 5:23).

Salvation

From our understanding of the New Testament, there are some important elements associated with salvation. Every element is rooted in scripture. These steps are actually a process in which a person grasps them both emotionally and intellectually. The Lord says we must believe in the power and person of Jesus Christ (John 3:16). It is also necessary for us to repent, or change our way of living that is against Jesus (Acts 2:37-38). Jesus has also asked us to be willing to confess to other people that we are His (Rom. 10:9-10). God, through the New Testament, also directs us to be immersed, or baptized, into Christ (Rom. 6:3-11). At that point we become part of Christ's body (Gal. 3:26-27).

Published creeds mark mainstream churches as apostate. They have become denominations

without a single eyebrow of their Biblically ignorant members being raised.

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children (Hos. 4:6).

Chapter Five

A Deadly Mixture In Mainstream Churches of Christ

The deadliest mixture in religion is a small amount of error mingled with truth. That was the serpent's tactic in the Garden of Eden when he **added** a single three-letter word to God's prohibition and changed its meaning: "Ye shall **not** surely die" (Gen. 3:4). Mainstream churches of Christ do the same by couching what truth they offer in generic language that is palatable to the religious world at large. That formula makes their doctrines as deadly to the soul as a few drops of arsenic in a glass of pure water is to the body.

Behind their facade as faithful churches of Christ are their oft-repeated, core shibboleths. Among them are, "our singing is a cappella" and "baptism for the remission of sins." Hard Shell Baptists sing without mechanical instruments and Mormons, Latter Day Saints, and Pentecostals baptize for the remission of sins. Harding University has adopted mainstream churches' shibboleths and added one more:

Though we live in a time of significant confusion over our brotherhood's identity, we are determined that Harding University will become captive to neither a rigid legalism on the right nor a formless liberalism on the left. "With gentleness and respect" (1 Peter 3:16) we affirm such distinctive convictions of the mainstream churches of Christ as baptism for the remission of sins, a cappella music in worship, and male spiritual leadership (www.harding.edu).

As a child, I learned simple Bible truths from my grandmother, my mother and my aunt that still echo through corridors of my consciousness: God's people "call Bible things by Bible names;" it isn't "my church," or "our church," but "Christ's church," and it isn't "our kingdom," but "God's kingdom." Sound speech that cannot be condemned is has been exchanged by mainstream churches of Christ for a modern Ashdodic cacophony. One example is the Second and Adams church of Christ in Elk City, Okla. whose electronic sign recently displayed, "Welcome to **Our Church.**"

Mainstream churches speak "half in the speech of Ashdod" (Neh.13:24) and, on rare occasions, "as the oracles of God" (1 Pet. 4:11). Taking care to not offend their religious neighbors, they describe the church of Christ in politically correct euphemisms like "church family," "my church family," or "our church family" (and their pox on any who teach that Christ established **only one church**).

The church is the family of **God**. Paul told Timothy: "These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God..." (1 Tim. 3:14-15).

God's house is **His** family. It is **not**, "our church family."

The creed on the website of the Fort Cobb, Okla. church begins, "As a church family (a group of imperfect people seeking the Lord), we believe the Bible is God's message revealed to us for the purpose of guiding us toward Him."

Each of their credal statements is prefaced with "**Our family believes.**" In their estimation, the church is not the one Jesus promised to build and established on Pentecost (Matt. 16:18; Acts 2:1-47), over which He is Head (Eph. 1:22-23), and which He will save in heaven (Eph. 5:23, 27). It is just a "**church family,**" or "**our family.**"

And why the parenthetical disclaimer that they are “a group of imperfect people seeking the Lord?” Is this to avoid a charge of legalism? One does not have to be perfect to preach the gospel in simple terms, as the imperfect Paul did (Gal. 1:13; 1 Tim. 1:12-13; 2 Cor. 3:12). Neither was Peter perfect (Gal. 2:11-14), but he pointedly preached the gospel without pointing that out to his hearers. (Acts 2:22-23).

The phrase that they are, “seeking the Lord” implies that they have not yet found Him and are not really Christians after all. Is that agnostic language designed to avert the charge that they are being **judgmental**?

To gain acceptance, respectability, and good will in the religious and secular worlds, mainstream churches of Christ choose to express their doctrines in nebulous, non-offensive terms. “The house of God, which is the church of the Living God” is also the kingdom of God, the body of Christ, the Lord’s vineyard, and the temple of God. It is no more my church family than it is my church, my body, my kingdom, my vineyard, or my temple. The phrases, “my church family,” and “our family” belong to Ashdod and betray a lack of respect for the church for which Jesus died. Sinners **need** to be taught that the church— not “our family”—was in God’s scheme of redemption from eternity and is Christ’s body in which all are saved who will enter it (Eph. 1:7, 11; 22-23; 5:23). When one refuses to preach **Christ’s church** he refuses to preach **Him** (Acts 5:12).

Indeed, the church **is** God’s family, and to refer to it as that is Scriptural. But when Scriptural language is modified and/or mixed with denominational Ashdodisms as mainstream churches do, it is a deadly combination. When Bible terms are corrupted, they no longer carry the meaning that God gave them. Members of the New Testament church “...are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light...” (1 Pet. 2:9). That does not sound like **our family**—a term found nowhere in The New Testament.

Mainstream churches who parrot denominational language cease to be a peculiar people and thereby surrender their distinction as the church that Jesus built.

Chapter Six

“Forging Our Identity...”

A close ally to mainstream churches of Christ has always been the college. Historically, the college has exerted a detrimental influence on the church as a source of apostasy in every era. For nearly 90 years, mainstream churches have been incrementally conditioned to accept the false premise that the church and so-called Christian Colleges are allied or associated—a relationship that was never intended or envisioned by their founders. In fact, they were not even called “Christian” colleges in the beginning.

Bethany College was founded in 1840 by Alexander Campbell. Its charter stated that “nothing herein shall be so construed as at any time to authorize the establishment of a Theological Professorship in said College” (Young, 176-179).

Tolbert and Charlotte Fanning established Franklin College on their farm five miles east of Nashville in 1845. They named it for Gospel preacher and editor Benjamin Franklin.

Probably the most revealing thing about the charter was its silence on the subject of religion. Fanning was a preacher and fully intended to teach the Bible as a textbook in his new college, but he did not propose that his school should be considered denominational. Although in practice the members of the board of trustees and the faculty were, with few exceptions, members of the Churches of Christ no such requirements were written into the charter.(Young, 41).

James A. Harding was a graduate of Campbell’s school at Bethany, Virginia in 1839 and David Lipscomb graduated from Fanning’s Franklin College in 1849. In 1889, the two men began planning the opening of a Bible school and in 1891 the following announcement appeared:

It is proposed to open a school in Nashville, September next, under safe and competent teachers in which the Bible, excluding all human opinions and philosophy, as the only rule of faith and practice; and the appointments of God, as ordained in the scriptures, excluding all innovations and organizations of men, as the fullness of divine wisdom, for converting sinners and perfecting saints, will earnestly be taught. The aim is to teach the Christian religion as represented in the Bible in its purity and fullness; and in teaching this to prepare Christians for usefulness, in whatever sphere they are called upon to labor. Such additional branches of learning will be taught as are needful and helpful in understanding and obeying the Bible and teaching it to others (Ibid.).

Prior to its founding and through the years of his association with it until his death in 1917, Lipscomb adamantly maintained that his school was not established as a preacher training school. “...all notices emphasized the fact that the school was not ‘especially to make preachers,’ but it was to teach the Bible, and with it all the branches of knowledge that would be useful and helpful to the students” (Young, 84).

From the beginning, Bethany College had no problem bidding God speed to denominations. Campbell had pleaded for religious unity upon the Scriptures alone and the dissolution of sectarianism.

“I have no idea of adding to the catalogue of new sects. This game has been played too long. I labor to see sectarianism abolished, and all Christians of every name united upon the one foundation on which the apostolic church was founded” (Campbell, “Reply to ‘T.T.’, *Christian Baptist*, cited

by West, 1:70).

Young wrote that, paradoxically, Campbell opened Bethany College's facilities to denominations on a weekly basis.

Interesting, in view of Campbell's plea for unity, is the provision that the College Hall should be used every Sunday for worship and instruction "to be performed by respectable ministers of various denominations." Ministers in any denomination were permitted to attend the college without tuition charges (28, 29).

Young highlighted the widespread influence of Bethany's (and Campbell's) influence on churches of Christ of that period and on those which followed:

Bethany College, which Campbell began in the fall of 1840, may be called a "mother of colleges" for her influence under Campbell's direction pervaded the restoration movement. Particularly in her early days when the movement was in a formative stage was her stamp placed on that part of the group later to be known separately as the Churches of Christ...Campbell's educational ideas were predominant in the college and throughout the brotherhood. His sentiments on the subject of education profoundly influenced both his contemporaries and his later disciples (W.E. Garrison, *Religion Follows the Frontier*, 168-169, cited by Young, 26, 27).

Campbell's educational ideas that predominated throughout the brotherhood live on today in his collegiate heirs. Denominational preachers are routinely invited to speak on lectureships, in chapel, and on other venues at "Christian Colleges." Women are welcomed to speak at colleges such as David Lipscomb University (DLU) and Abilene Christian University (ACU).

Beyond the doctrinal error of DLU and ACU, Freed-Hardeman University (FHU) has added immorality to its curriculum by offering art classes in which live, nude, models pose. All of these institutions are defended, promoted, and supported by mainstream churches of Christ who erroneously believe the college and the church are affiliated.

So-called Christian colleges are neither the church, works of the church, parts of the church, nor adjuncts of the church. Neither does the New Testament church have any affiliated organizations. But the myth that "our colleges" are "affiliated with" or related to the church has been chanted for so many decades that ignorant members now accept it as truth. Observe these statements from four current institutions of higher learning, claiming to be "a resource for" or "affiliated with" the church:

Oklahoma Christian University of Science and Arts (OCUSA) At the very heart of this university is a desire to be a friend, ally and resource for churches of Christ (www.ocu.edu/churchrelations).

Abilene Christian University was established in 1906 by members of Churches of Christ and has been closely affiliated with this body for nearly a century. The university is committed to biblical principles. Historically we believe these principles were reaffirmed through the Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement begun in early 19th century America and expressed today through Churches of Christ. Defining ourselves as a 'movement,' we are constantly in the process of articulating the basic elements of our biblically-based faith for our times—all without the involvement of denominational hierarchy. As an institution of Christian higher education within the movement, we are called to examine how our theological perspectives shape our educational philosophy.

We also recognize that the church-related colleges in the Restoration Movement (and ACU in particular in the 20th century) have played a major role in forging our identity as Churches of Christ (www.acu.edu/faith.html).

Pepperdine University is religiously affiliated with the Churches of Christ, of which Mr. Pepperdine, university founder, was a lifelong member. Faculty, administrators and members of the Board of Regents represent many religious backgrounds, and students of all races and faiths are welcomed (www.pepperdine.edu).

Harding University Harding has always been deeply connected with churches of Christ, and we reaffirm this connection (www.harding.edu/about/spiritual_vision).

What do these schools mean by claiming to be church-related, affiliated with, allies of, or connected with churches of Christ? *The Cambridge Dictionary* says *affiliated* means, “connected with, or controlled, by a group or organization.” *Merriam-Webster* says it means “closely associated with another typically in a dependent or subordinate position.” *Collins Dictionary* says, “If an organization is affiliated with another larger organization, it is officially connected with the larger organization or is a member of it.”

Jesus promised to build His church (Matt. 16:18), purchased it with His blood (Acts 20:28), is its foundation (1 Cor. 3:11), the Head over it (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18), adds the saved to it (Acts 2:47), and is the Savior of it (Eph. 5:23). Christ’s church has no external resources, allies, or affiliates. The church is the fullness of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23). He is the Alpha and Omega of it and neither Christ nor His church need anything outside of Him.

Are colleges, “connected with, or controlled, by a group or organization”—the church? Are they “typically in a dependent or subordinate position” to the church? The New Testament knows nothing of such an arrangement. The church has no dependent or subordinate organizations and it is certainly **not** dependent on, or subordinate to, colleges.

There was a time when colleges understood their places as adjuncts of the home, having neither association nor affiliation with the church. That was clearly stated by David Lipscomb College in the introduction to its 1947 Lectureship Book:

The Christian college is intended to help mothers and fathers bring up their children ‘in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.’ This includes opposition to digression, to modernism, to premillennialism, to any form of personal ungodliness or impiety, and to any other unscriptural doctrine or practice that may arise in the years to come. No teacher, or other person connected with the institution, has a right to teach, or behave, in such a manner as to undermine the foundation principles upon which the college stands. Lipscomb purposes to continue in the classroom the daily Bible teaching which every child should receive in the home. In no sense does the school propose to supplant the church or to do the work of the church. There is no substitute for the church of our Lord. The relation of the Christian college to the church is the same as the relation of the Christian home to the church. The college strives to be Christian in exactly the same sense that a home or a personal life may be Christian (*The Lipscomb Lectures, A Series of Lectures Delivered at David Lipscomb College, January 27-31, 1947*, Gospel Advocate Co., Nashville, 1948).

Colleges have corrupted and misused the proper noun *Christian*. The Bible says nothing of *Christian* colleges. Nor does it mention a *Christian* restaurant, a *Christian* lumber yard, a

Christian grocery store, or any other private or public entity called *Christian*. There is no such thing as a Christian **anything**, except a human being. The proper noun, *Christian* is found only three times in the New Testament (Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Pet. 4:16), and in none of those does it refer to anything but a follower of Christ.

Human institutions are not Christians and colleges are human institutions. It may be reasoned that a college should be called *Christian* because its board, administration, and faculty are all Christians. By that reasoning it could be argued that Smith's Department Store may be Scripturally called Smith's *Christian* Department Store if the Smiths and their employees are all Christians. Therefore Smith's *Christian* Department Store may be advertised as *affiliated with churches of Christ* or *deeply connected with churches of Christ*. If not, why not?

For decades, colleges operated by members of the church have portrayed themselves as associated or affiliated with the church and mainstream churches, their members, preachers, and elders have swallowed that fable, hook, line, and sinker. That error has allowed colleges to "follow the money" and tap an additional source of revenue. Eight decades ago, a battle raged over colleges demanding churches to put them in their budgets and many of them did. It is "no new thing under the sun" that colleges are doing the same today.

Foy E. Wallace, Jr. addressed the so called connection between the church and colleges 80 years ago in *The Bible Banner*. His words could have easily been written yesterday:

In the current controversy among the brethren over the sphere of the school, the college and the church, certain colleges are themselves the aggressors. The controversy will be just as easily stopped as it was started—just let the schools abandon their departures, discontinue their objectionable practices, reform their worldliness, cease to infringe on the divine principle of the independence of the church from all human institutions, and quit imposing on congregations, and all will be well. In short, let the college stay in its place, and let the church alone.

For an example of the aggression mentioned, one of the leaders of the campaign to put the college in the budget of the churches closed an article with the statement that if it is not right to put the college in the budget, then he would join Daniel Sommer and be done with it. In other words, he will have it this way or no way! It is that "this way or no way" spirit that has always driven the wedges, forcing issues upon the brethren, then blaming those in honest opposition to their schemes for resultant dissensions. It was so in the digressive movement that split the church. It has been so in the "Boll movement" which says "we will have our theories." It is now so in the present controversy with the colleges whose leader and mouthpiece says "we will have the budget or nothing." In that case the brethren should see to it that it will be nothing—from the churches. With this announced attitude the colleges can blame no one but themselves for the growing opposition to them, or for any division or alienation that may arise over the discussions.

We are charged with having attacked the colleges, with being anti-college, and withal of an attempt to destroy these institutions. But to the contrary this editor himself attended one in early life, has for several years had his children in them at intervals, and if when his younger children grow up there is yet one of the colleges true to the principles we believe he will likely continue his patronage. Nobody engaged in the present controversy is fighting the college, Neither *The Bible Banner* nor its editor is. *The Firm Foundation* and its editor are not. We are simply opposed to the extremes to which the colleges

in question have gone, to their worldliness, to their tendency toward ecclesiastical control, to their doctrinal weakness, and to their general departures. We are not alone in this. Some of the trustees of these institutions admit the things that have been charged, recognize the conditions as they exist and have expressed themselves as desiring to perform the needed reforms. If all those in the high places were of the same mind, and others upon whom they have apparently depended for leadership, were of the same disposition, the institutions could speedily win back the individual confidence and support of that great host of brethren who are now set against their practices.

Since it has been charged that the present writer is creating an issue and his convictions on this question are of recent origin, it will not be considered amiss, perhaps, to reproduce some editorials which appeared in the *Gospel Advocate* several years ago while the editor of the *Bible Banner* was then editor of the *Gospel Advocate*. That all may know that no change in positions has been made, and in refutation of such charges as are going around that “thou art mad” and “thou art beside thyself,” and to show that the attitude held now toward the colleges is precisely the same as the attitude held then, the following editorials are resubmitted.

The Church and the School

The subjects of man and education are very intimately related, if not inseparably connected. The interrogation of David, “What is man?” has become the question of the ages and the problem of the sages. But David did not leave it for the worldlywise philosopher, by his own ratiocination, to determine; for he answers: “Know ye that Jehovah, he is God: it is he that hath made us, and we are his.” Man is not the creature of chance or evolution. Made in the image of God, he possesses reason, affection, and conscience. Lifted above the creature of automatic instinct, he is more than a creature; he is a child of God. What, then should his education be? And here, alongside the question “What is man?” is presented another of but little less importance—What is education? The word signifies complete development. It does not consist merely in the art of learning to read and write or to cipher. It is not the acquisition of languages, living or dead. It involves the development of the whole being—body, mind, and soul.

This view of man and his education leads to the subject of the “Bible colleges”—their place and work in the field of education. If education consists merely in the training of the intellect, we need have no concern for the establishment and maintenance of such colleges. But it is the keenly felt need of heart training that has brought the “Bible college” into existence. Education has its degrees; and, grammatically speaking, physical culture is the positive degree, intellectual culture is the comparative degree and moral culture is the superlative degree. Hence the demand for schools that will give emphasis to the moral above every other line of human development. The Bible being the greatest textbook of morals in the universe, it is but a matter of simple reason that it should be prescribed in the course of study by a school seeking to reach the heart, as well as the mind. Because the Bible has thus been adopted by such schools, they have been denominated “Bible colleges,” while in fact, every other branch of learning found in all colleges of arts and sciences is also taught.

But the name “Bible college” has caused so much confusion in the minds of so many that it becomes necessary to discuss the relation of the school and the church. Let us compare the work of the church with the work of the school in seeking to obtain the

correct answer to the questions involved. The Bible teaches that the work of the church is two fold. First, missionary, pertaining to the spread of the gospel—the salvation of souls. Hence, the church is called “the pillar and ground of the truth.”

Second, benevolent, pertaining to the care of the poor, orphan, or aged. This is referred to as “pure religion.” The Bible further teaches that the church is all-sufficient to carry out this divine mission without the aid of human machinery. Any organization larger or smaller than the local congregation is an unscriptural organization through which to do the work of the church, and takes away from it the praise and glory. Therefore, we condemn the missionary society as an auxiliary to the church, a human machine seeking to do the work that God has commanded his church to do. We pronounce it, without further argument here, unscriptural.

What, then, is the “Bible college?” It is an auxiliary indeed, but not to the church. Let us observe in this connection the mission of the home and the duty of parents toward their children. Solomon said: “Train up a child in the way he should go.” Paul said: “Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” This is the solemn obligation of the parent and the sacred mission of the home. But when the child reaches a certain school age, when it must pass from the home into the school, does the responsibility of the parent cease? Is it not still the serious duty of the parent to select the school where the influence of the home is continued? In this matter, then, the school simply takes the place of the home and the teacher assumes the responsibility of the parent. So the “Bible college,” or the “Christian college,” or whatever you may please to call it, is no more than auxiliary to the home. It supplements the work of the home. Some who have not made proper discrimination have wrought confusion by associating the “Bible college” with the work of the church. Others have, therefore, opposed it on the ground that it is a “church school,” while others think it is wrong and sinful to teach the Bible in school. Such a conclusion should drive the Bible from our homes also and force the conclusion that it can be taught only in the meeting house on Sunday!

These principles are fundamental. Let us draw the lines clearly. We have pointed out the central thought of the subject—namely, the school as an auxiliary of the home. This being true, it is not the business of the church to run it. The church is not in the school business. The only way the church can Scripturally do its work is through the elders of the local congregation. Appeals made to churches, therefore, in behalf of schools are wrong—fundamentally wrong—wrong in principle. Let the school stand where it belongs, apart from the church, as an aid to, and adjunct of, the home. Let parents and individuals realize their duty and feel their responsibility in the support and maintenance of them, thus making it possible for our children and our neighbors’ children to have the training and influence they so much need and deserve (*The Bible Banner*, Sept., 1938).

Dipping into churches’ funds by colleges decades ago still persists and it’s as wrong today as it was then. Modern colleges have no problem begging for funds from church treasuries, but they cannot justify it by authority of the scriptures. One example is Heritage Christian University (HCU) in Florence, Alabama, whose president mailed the following letter to churches 14 years ago:

June 13, 2005
Northeast Church of Christ
P. O. Box 267
Elk City, OK 73644-0267

Dear Brethren,

Real World Ministry. That's what Heritage Christian University is all about. Consider what some of our students, staff, and alumni have done just this year in their ministries in the real world:

- One graduate has knocked every door in the small town he serves...5 times in the past 5 years
- One student has baptized over a dozen inmates in our local jail.
- Some of our students have become foster parents for children in need.
- Another graduate traveled to Asia to offer relief to tsunami victims.
- Two of our campaign workers met a lady who, in a tragic accident, suffered the loss of her three children and sustained a broken back. The HCU student and staff member cleaned her house to pass a HUD inspection and restocked her pantry.
- Our students regularly go to hospitals, to nursing homes, to hospices, and to children's homes and bring smiles to lonely faces.

As I watch our students and hear from our graduates in the field, I am reminded of James 1:27: 'Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.'

I see that kind of religion in action daily...sacrificial... loving service.

Besides working to keep themselves and others from being spoiled by the world, our students help the poor and sick, care for the widows and orphans, and teach the gospel of Jesus Christ everywhere they go. Pure and undefiled religion! Real service for the real world.

When you support our ministry, you become a part of that. My prayer is that you will choose to become actively involved in helping us fulfill our mission.

Right now, I need your special consideration. Rising fuel prices have led to increased costs on every hand. As a result, our expenses have been higher this year than we expected. We still need to raise \$229,028 to balance the budget before the fiscal year ends June 30.

Will you send \$500.00 now? And will you send it this week? If you can send more, it will be greatly appreciated.

We know that, sometimes, monetary decisions in churches may take a little longer. Please be sure that your gift reaches us before June 30.

Please be generous. Your gift helps to ensure that students are equipped to teach and practice Pure and undefiled religion.

Sincerely,
(Signature)

Dennis Jones, President Heritage Christian University

P.S. We absolutely must balance our budget. June 30 is the deadline. You are the key to

our success (Letter from Heritage Christian University, June 13, 2005).

HCU's letter is an example of the college usurping the function of the church. No college can Scripturally do that—even by calling its work a “ministry.” While the good works done by students, faculty, and staff are worthy ones, can “pure and undefiled religion” not be practiced without this school? Where were the colleges when James wrote his epistle describing pure and undefiled religion? Is it the college's place to teach Christians to “keep himself unspotted from the world,” to help the poor, sick, widows and orphans, and to “teach the gospel of Jesus Christ everywhere they go?” Where was the college that taught the dispersed disciples from Jerusalem to go “everywhere preaching the word?” (Acts 8:4). It is not the “mission” of Heritage Christian University, nor any other so-called “Christian” school to go into all the world and preach the gospel. That is the exclusive province of the church, and it is a misrepresentation for President Jones to ask for funds to “support our ministry” and help “us fulfill our mission.” There is only **one ministry** known in the New Testament and it was never given to a college.

Upon what Scriptural authority do President Jones and the HCU trustees base their plea for alms from church treasuries? Even a cursory glance at this letter indicates that HCU makes its plea based upon doing what God gave the church to do. It is **not** the function of the college to train workers in the vineyard of the Lord. That is the function of the church. The college is neither associated with, affiliated with, owned by, operated by, an adjunct of, connected with, nor a part of, the blood bought church of Christ. Colleges have a right to exist, but they do **not** have Biblical authority to inject themselves into the work of the church, usurp its mission, or supplant it in any fashion. To do so is to create an entity foreign to the New Testament—something Abilene Christian University (ACU) is doing by what it calls, “forging our identity as churches of Christ” on its website:

Colleges “have played a major role”—and **are** playing a major role—in the emergence of a new denomination from within mainstream churches of Christ. That is admitted in the above statement: “... church-related colleges in the Restoration Movement (and ACU in particular in the 20th century) have played a major role in **forging our identity as Churches of Christ.**”

Bethany College and J.A. Randolph's former Add-Ran College at Thorp Spring, Texas—now Texas Christian University—are today in the hands of The Disciples of Christ denomination. The identity of the church that colleges have forged is **not** its identity revealed in Holy Writ. Theirs more closely resembles Jereboam's golden calves at Dan and Bethel than it does the church that Jesus built.

In the last five or six decades, colleges have propagandized mainstream churches to such an degree that they are now regarded as adjuncts of the church. Seemingly innocent things like mission work carried on by colleges, as Oklahoma Christian University (OCU) does, has helped in “forging our identity as Churches of Christ.” From OCU's website comes this:

Summer mission work is a widespread opportunity for OC students. From a mission trip to Australia with OC Missionary in Residence Kent Hartman to a summer with Associate Professor of Youth Ministry Dudley Chancey in Honduras, around 20 different groups participate in summer missions.

“Wonderful,” says one who wouldn't know if Jesus Christ died on Calvary or was shot at First Manassas, “they're doing mission work. Why do you oppose that”?

For a most Biblical reason. No human organization was ever charged by the Lord to, “Go ye

into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). The Great Commission given to the apostles and, consequently, to the church. By what Scriptural authority does any college—a human organization—do the work of the church? There is none.

Who oversees, and is responsible for, the “mission work” of Oklahoma Christian University? Elders oversee the church and its work, which includes domestic and foreign evangelism, called “mission work.” Elders have no oversight of any college, nor should they. Their work as shepherds of the church is spiritual. Neither should any college do the work of the church. What OCU—a secular institution—has done usurps the mission Christ gave His church. This is one of the many ways that colleges are “forging our identity as Churches of Christ” and is another impetus for mainstream churches to become another denomination. But that is “no new thing.” An identity foreign to the New Testament was forged for churches of Christ in the 19th century that resulted in the emergence of the Christian Church denomination from among them.

The historical path of the restoration movement in this country is strewn with the wreckage of colleges that began with high hopes and purposes, but eventually became evil influences in the church. One example is Texas Christian University (TCU) in Ft. Worth which was established by Christians, but is now a Disciples of Christ college. TCU began at Thorp Spring, Texas as Add Ran College in 1873. It was established by J.A. Clark and his two sons, Addison and Randolph Clark, for whom the college was named, all of whom had been faithful gospel preachers in Fort Worth for a number of years. In 1877, Add Ran financially collapsed, but was resurrected shortly afterward. In 1890, it became Add Ran University, and by 1893 Addison and Randolph Clark broke with their father over the use of a mechanical instrument in worship.

For sometime the restoration movement in Texas had been threatened with division. The school at Thorp Spring became the location for one of the first open breaks between the churches of Christ and the Disciples. In the fall of 1893 the issue was brought to the front by the introduction of an organ into the worship during a revival meeting in the college chapel. J.A. Clark and ‘two thirds of the congregation’ arose and walked out when the instrument was used (‘The B.B. Sanders Meeting,’ *Firm Foundation*, April 10, 1894). The organ continued to be used and those who objected were forced to meet elsewhere. From that time the university became recognized as a Disciples school. ...after trying times the school was finally located in Fort Worth. There it developed into Texas Christian University sponsored by the Disciples of Christ (Young, 72).

A fuller account of the division caused by the organ was given by Don Morris in 1973:

The instrument was first in congregations in Dallas, San Marcos, Waco, Lancaster, Palestine and other places...But the place at which the introduction of the organ received most attention was, without doubt, Thorp Spring, in Add-Ran College. The occasion was a gospel meeting in February, 1894. The speaker was B. B. Sanders, and the song director, E. M. Douthitt. These two often worked as a team and were known to use the instrument in worship. Before the meeting began, there was much discussion—on and off the campus of Add-Ran—about whether the organ would be used. As the meeting began, a crisis at Add-Ran was developing. It proved to affect the church throughout the state. On February 20, 1894, the climax was reached. Before the service began, Joseph Addison Clark—the father and pioneer—and his wife took seats at the front of the auditorium. Their son Addison Clark, the president, arose to begin the service. Joseph Addison Clark arose, walked toward the pulpit, took a paper from his pocket,

and presented it to his son. It was a petition. The petition was signed by the elder Clark and more than a hundred others, who asked that the organ not be used, on the ground that it was not authorized in the New Testament. Addison read the petition, conferred briefly with his brother Randolph, and then announced that he had promised the students that the organ could be used in the meeting and that he could not go back on his word. He turned to the organist and said, 'Play on, Miss Bertha.' As the organ and singing started, Joseph Addison arose with his wife and led the opposition out of the auditorium. He was a gray bearded man, seventy- eight years old, with a cane. About 140 people, according to Randolph's son Joseph Lynn, followed the elderly Clark out of the building. Many in the remaining congregation wept. My father, who was a student that year, was present, and he told me many times about Uncle Joe Clark—how he appealed to the audience not to use the organ and how he led the group out of the auditorium (Morris, 86, 87).

A strange identity of the church was forged in its work with the establishment of the Missionary Society in 1849. H. Leo Boles made that clear to Christian Church representatives in his address at a unity meeting between churches of Christ and the Christian Church in Indianapolis, May 3, 1939:

It will be admitted by all that the Missionary Society was thus the first departure from the original grounds of the New Testament teaching as set forth by the pioneers when they united; those who made the departure were responsible for the division on this point. The 'Christian Church' departed from the ground of unity and attempted to justify its course in the organization of the Missionary Society.

The colleges' unauthorized incursions into the foreign evangelistic work of the church is parallel to the rise of the American Christian Missionary Society. When it was established in 1849, its first president was the founder of Bethany College, Alexander Campbell.

Though not called by that term, the American Christian Missionary Society had been ruminating in Campbell's mind since he first wrote of cooperative efforts in 1831. Ten years later, the idea had been formed and he concluded that some sort of organization was necessary for the church to convert the world. His rationale for a brotherhood wide organization to evangelize the world came from his view of the church in the universal sense—a view held by the Roman and Protestant churches.

More than 20 years ago, a mainstream church in Cleveland, Oklahoma fired its preacher when he rightly opposed that church contributing to an elder's granddaughter—a student at Oklahoma Christian—who planned a "mission trip" under the auspices of the college. Those are the kinds of elders who oversee mainstream churches of Christ. They have no concept of the church or its mission and are willing to allow colleges be their missionary societies.

Things have changed little in the last two centuries. The historical road that churches of Christ have traversed on the North American continent over the last 150 years is littered with the wreckage of apostate churches who were ruined by the influence of colleges. Begun with high and noble purposes, those schools became forums for the propagation of doctrinal error, ironically aided and abetted by the very churches they destroyed. Nothing has changed.

When churches consider schools as works of the church or their allies, they launch into a stormy voyage that will eventually dash them to pieces upon rocky reefs of error. Schools are adjuncts of the home, first, last, and always. They are neither the church, a part of it, an adjunct

of it, affiliated with it, associated with it, nor a work of it.

Chapter Seven

The Social Gospel of Mainstream Churches

The extent to which mainstream churches of Christ are influenced by the Social Gospel is without question. In the last five decades, their love affair with it has accelerated their further decline into liberalism. As Social Gospel practitioners, they have adopted Pendleton's 19th century heresy which says what God has not expressly forbidden is permitted as an expedient.

It is no secret, nor should we be surprised, that churches of Christ who still walk in the old paths are now marginalized by mainstream Social Gospel practitioners. That has led society to view faithful churches of Christ as insignificant factions—as the pejorative term “sect” was hurled at the church by her enemies in the first century (Acts 24:5, 14).

The “walking Bibles”—as members of the church were known in the 1930s, 40s, and 50s—are still among us. But they are far fewer in number, shunned as **legalists** and disdained as **radical** by both denominations and mainstream churches of Christ.

The Social Gospel

The marriage between mainstream churches of Christ and the Social Gospel is evident in the multitudinous “ministries” listed on their websites. Most of them are designed to “minister” to man's physical and emotional needs. If they even mention evangelism as a “ministry” it is usually relegated to **one** among many.

At its root, the Social Gospel is infidelity. Its root form was held by the 19th century infidel, Robert Owen who debated Alexander Campbell in Cincinnati, April 13-21, 1839. West described Owen and his social philosophy:

At the age of eighteen he had become a partner in a cotton mill, He was successful and arose rapidly in the business world. He became head of the New Lanark Mills of Glasgow, employing over two thousand persons. He entered upon many benevolent projects to improve the working classes, and soon himself became quite wealthy. He began visiting foreign countries, delivering speeches. Unfortunately, the good he advocated was mixed with evil, for in addition to wanting to improve the social system, he fought Christianity, as standing opposed to all progress (1:74).

The Social Gospel is a merger of Owen's brand of socialism with 19th century religion. That early form of religious socialism came to full fruition in the early 20th century and has been a dominant religious force ever since. Wikipedia recounts its early beginnings and growth:

In the United States prior to World War I, the Social Gospel was the religious wing of the progressive movement which had the aim of combating injustice, suffering and poverty in society. Denver, Colorado, was a center of Social Gospel activism. Thomas Uzzel led the Methodist People's Tabernacle from 1885 to 1910. He established a free dispensary for medical emergencies, an employment bureau for job seekers, a summer camp for children, night schools for extended learning, and English language classes. Myron Reed of the First Congregational Church became a spokesman, 1884 to 1894 for labor unions on issues such as worker's compensation. His middle-class congregation encouraged Reed to move on when he became a Socialist, and he organized a non-denominational church. The Baptist minister Jim Goodhart set up an employment bureau, and provided food and lodging for tramps and hobos at the mission he ran. He became

city chaplain and director of public welfare of Denver in 1918. Besides these Protestants, Reform Jews and Catholics helped build Denver's social welfare system in the early 20th century.

The Rev. Mark A. Matthews (1867-1940) of Seattle's First Presbyterian Church was a leading city reformer, who investigated red light districts and crime scenes, denouncing corrupt politicians businessmen and saloon keepers. With 10,000 members, his was the largest Presbyterian Church in the country, and he was selected the national moderator in 1912. He built a model church, with night schools, unemployment bureaus, kindergarten, an anti-tuberculosis clinic, and the nation's first church owned radio station. Matthews was the most influential clergymen in the Pacific Northwest, and one of the most active Social Gospelers in America.

Another of the defining theologians for the Social Gospel movement was Walter Rauschenbusch, a Baptist pastor of a congregation located in Hell's Kitchen. Rauschenbusch railed against what he regarded as the selfishness of capitalism and promoted a form of Christian Socialism that supported the creation of labor unions and cooperative economics.

In *A Theology for the Social Gospel*, Rauschenbusch states that the individualistic gospel has made sinfulness of the individual clear, but it has not shed light on institutionalized sinfulness: 'It has not evoked faith in the will and power of God to redeem the permanent institutions of human society from their inherited guilt of oppression and extortion.' This ideology would be inherited by liberation theologians and civil rights advocates and leaders such as Martin Luther King, Jr.

[Washington] Gladden (1836-1918) was an American clergyman. His words and actions earned him the title of 'a pioneer' of the Social Gospel even before the term came into use. Gladden spoke up for workers and their right to organize unions. For Gladden, the 'Christian law covers every relation of life' including the relationship between employers and their employees.

The sum and substance of the Social Gospel could be expressed in no better terms than Walter Rauschenbusch's philosophy: "Rauschenbusch wrote that 'Christianity is in its nature revolutionary' and tried to remind society of that. He taught that the Kingdom of God 'is not a matter of getting individuals to heaven, but of transforming the life on earth into the harmony of heaven'" (*Wikipedia*).

The Social Gospel emphasizes the here and now, rather than eternal life to come. It relegates the church's mission to preach the gospel (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16) to a low priority, if any at all, and mainstream churches of Christ are leaping onto its bandwagon in droves.

The former Dean of Chicago University's Divinity School, Dr. Shailer Matthews, claimed to be the first person to study and promote the Social Gospel in American religion and exulted over its progress in American denominations 91 years ago:

...churches have begun to represent new social interests. The conception of religious education has materially broadened. It is no longer a mere teaching of the Bible, the catechism, and the 'lesson helps,' but a seeking to develop moral attitudes within the spheres of life. If the nineteenth-century church discovered the needs of childhood, the 20th century has discovered the needs of children. Kindergartens, nurseries, parents' classes, are growing common. Many churches have a complete outfit for community

centers with necessary apparatus for athletics, sociability, dramatics, and of course, for dining; for if the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, the modern church has learned to line the road to it with opportunities for the saints to refresh themselves. Quite as striking is the widespread avowal of loyalty to the Christ-spirit in wider social and economic fields. Denomination after denomination has adopted or enlarged the social creed drawn up by the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America. Although reactionaries may protest, and the elder statesmen of Christendom may warn, the generation now coming on to the stage of church life is full of social spirit (141).

Dr. W.R. Inge was Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral in 1930 when he wrote his Social Gospel treatise, *The Social Teaching of the Church*. Like other Social Gospel advocates, he admitted that it was not taught by the apostles but said it was, in fact, an **improvement over** their doctrine.

The Christian standard of values is permanently true. But I should not be honest if I suppressed my conviction that there is something lacking both in the outlook of the New Testament and in that of the Church, both in early times and down to our own day...The notion of an "end of the age," a legacy of Palestinian apocalypticism, helped to paralyze the secular energies of the Christian Church and infected even the Pagans. In short, we look in vain for any trace of that inspiring vision of a better world, to be brought about on this earth by the collective efforts of mankind, which forms so large a part of the idealism of our own time. Do we really think that the work assigned to us as Christians is less important than that which occupies the attention of politicians? Do we really think that any solid and stable amelioration of society can be made without a new heart and a new spirit? If we do, we shall be making a far worse mistake than the early Church did when it neglected social reform altogether (48).

Inge's explanation of the Social Gospel is Owen's system of infidelity. Mainstream churches of Christ, and their preachers and elders who are marching in lockstep with the tenets of the Social Gospel have adopted a system rooted in infidelity.

In the 19th century, American religion shifted its emphasis from salvation and eternal life to a secular religio-socialism. That new emphasis was to reform social and civil institutions and provide material benefits for everyone. In short, denominationalism created the Social Gospel by merging Karl Marx's secular socialism with their religion.

What has been is that which shall be. Matthews' gushing description of denominations in 1928 has come full circle within mainstream churches of Christ. Michael Hatcher described their evolution from the truth to the Social Gospel.:

The mission of the church is singular in nature...The social gospel changes that purpose to make the church responsible for alleviating the social ills of society. Thus, for these it became the purpose of the church to feed the hungry, stop pollution, advocating the disarmament of nuclear warheads, and any type of imagined social ill that came along (often these took the ill of various addictions that people develop: alcoholism, drugs, pornography, etc.). Normally joining with these social ills was the providing of recreational activities for members. With this there was soon the joining of sports leagues with denominational groups (what becomes the difference between the Lord's church and the denominations at that point?). This also paralleled the building of basketball courts and gymnasiums (often called family life centers to mislead others as to the nature of them). These activities are often justified by saying that we will draw them in

this way and then teach them the Gospel. The sports activities then paved the way for other types of activities: taking the children to plays or theme parks, or other group outings. (One of the favorites of today was the trunk or treat for Halloween—all in name of the kids, of course.)...We need to remember that the drawing power is the Gospel, not the social activism, social activities, and gimmicks of man. ...Our call to arms is to go make disciples of Christ (Mat. 28:19-20), not provide social services for people; to save souls, not provide recreation for members (6).

Mainstream churches of Christ described by brother Hatcher are not very far from any of us. Conduct your own website search for one near you and you will find what we found in our state.

Compare mainstream churches' "ministries" listed on their websites with the Social Gospel model examined above:

The **Elm & Hudson church in Altus, Okla.** lists these: Youth Ministry, Family Ministry, College Ministry, Small Groups Ministry, Missions Ministry and Community Ministry. Under its "Community Outreach Ministry" is one of the most egregious definitions of the church's purpose that we have seen among churches of Christ:

We have been called to go out and preach the word. We feel that this starts in our own community. We strive to look after the needs of not only our spiritual family but also the needs of those in our area. Our hope is that through our efforts we will be the hands and feet of Jesus in Altus. Our prayer is that our community will come to know Jesus by our love. Carpenter's Kitchen, Garage Giveaway, Christmas Hams, School Supplies Giveaway, Community Service Projects.

Rauschenbusch said Christianity "is not a matter of getting individuals to heaven, but of transforming the life on earth into the harmony of heaven." That appears to be the philosophy of the Elm and Hudson church—transforming lives to the harmony of heaven with school supplies and Christmas hams without preaching the Gospel to folks. Is that what they mean by being "called to go out and preach the word?"

From the website of the **Fourth and College church in Cordell, Okla.** come these: Adult Ministry, Children's Ministry, Youth and Family Ministry.

The website of the **Second and Adams church in Elk City, Okla.** lists these: Young Married Ministry, Youth Ministry, Fellowship Ministry, OSBE Ministry.

The **Weatherford, Okla. church** lists these:

Bible Class Ministry, Curriculum Ministry, Small Groups Ministry, Bulldogs For Christ: College Ministry, Youth Ministry, Adult Ministry, Missions Ministry, Faith @ Home Ministry.

In one of the longest lists of Social Gospel ministries, the **Custer Avenue church, in Clinton, Okla.** has these on its website:

Youth Ministry, MOPS (Mothers of Preschoolers) Ministry, Family Ministry, Step Recovery Journey Ministry, Education Ministry, Grief Ministry, Senior Ministry. Under "Other Ministries" Custer Ave. lists, BibleTalk.tvLaw Ministry, Church of Christ Disaster Relief Ministry, Eastern European Missions Ministry, FriendSpeak Ministry, Let's Start Talking Ministry, Sunset International Bible Institute Ministry, Tipton Home Ministry, Westview Boys Home Ministry, What God Has Joined Ministry, and Benevolence Ministry.

The **Northwest church in Durant, Okla.** lists nine ministries:

College Ministry, Youth and Family Ministry, Campus and Young Professionals Ministry, Women's Ministry, Feeders Ministry, Life Group Ministry, Deaf Ministry, Missions Ministry, Benevolence Ministry.

The **Southern Oaks church in Chickasha, Okla.** has this:

Food and Clothing Ministry. The Southern Oaks congregation operates Grady County's largest food pantry and clothing room. Literally tons of groceries are distributed to hundreds of families each month through the Food and Clothing Room facilities in the 100 Block of South 5th Street in downtown Chickasha.

The **Del City, Okla. church** has a "Garden Ministry," described this way:

Grow and Serve

For anyone who enjoys gardening, whether it be working in a vegetable garden or planting and tending flowers, we invite you to come and help us provide nourishing food and beauty for the community around us. As fresh vegetables become available throughout the growing season, a vegetable stand is utilized to dispense whatever is currently available to the public (www.delcitychurch.org).

The **Central church of Christ in Ada, Okla.** has this:

Compassion Outreach Clinic. The purpose of the Compassion Outreach Center is to share the compassionate love of Jesus Christ for those in need of limited chronic care but have no medical insurance, Medicare, or Medicaid and reside within Pontotoc County. We are open twice a month, every 2nd and 4th Tuesday from 5:00p.m. to 9p.m. It was created in response to the growing problem of uninsured Americans. Reports indicated that 19.9 percent of all Oklahomans have no health insurance. Within our county alone that translates into about 6,892 patients. At our present patient load it would take us about 19 years to treat this group, but with God's grace He has provided an ample supply of medical providers, nurses, pharmacist, licensed counselors, social workers, staff members and prayer encourages that are beginning to make a difference throughout this county! Last year we saw 1,500 patients and dispensed over 5,000 prescriptions!

We Are Always In Need of Volunteers!

If you come from a medical or dental background and would like to help, we definitely need you!

We also need compassionate volunteers to help with the registration team, prayer encourager team, cleanup team, clothing closet team, food preparation team, administrative assistant team and special events team-like the Mega Garage Sale Team!

"Counseling Services Ministry"

Faith Based Counseling Services is a partnership with Bud Ross and Toby Ross. Bud offers counsel that flows out of decades of pastoral experience. Toby is a Licensed Professional Counselor and has 20 years of pastoral experience.

Enid Okla.'s North Garland Church has a "Softball Ministry":

North Garland hosts a non-competitive church softball league every year in late spring early summer. This is an easy going, co-ed league that exists to encourage fun and fellowship between churches. All games are played on the North Garland field, which has

lights for night games, and are played on Tuesdays or Thursdays at 6:30, 7:30, or 8:30. The season normally consists of about 10 games with a tournament at the end (www.northgarlandchurch.org).

The **Maryville, Tenn. church** has a gymnasium ministry.

OUTREACH CENTER (Activities) – The outreach center is home for basketball, volleyball, and other activities with emphasis on fellowship and outreach to nonmembers. It also contains the fitness center and the Youth Room (www.maryvillechurchofchrist.org).

In Chapter One, we defined some mainstream churches of Christ as those “who do not preach error, but willingly fellowship churches and preachers who do (1 John 1:6-7; 2 John 9-11),” and “Churches...who have long standing reputations as being ‘sound in the faith’ and wield a great influence among other churches of Christ in their areas, and elsewhere (Rev. 3:1).

One church that falls into these categories is **Forest Hill in Memphis, Tenn.** Forest Hill is the home of the Memphis School of Preaching (MSOP) whose influence among mainstream churches extends not only across the United States, but into foreign lands as well. The following article excerpt, reprinted in their bulletin from *Think* magazine (apparently with the blessing of their elders), typifies Forest Hill’s affection for the Social Gospel:

The world (through Satan) is very good at meeting social needs. Very good! The church needs to be very good as well. The men’s ministry in our congregation always has scheduled events we can invite any male visitor or person in the community in their 20s. When we meet someone, our next statement is usually: ‘Would you like to play basketball with us Tuesday night?’

‘The 20s will take a short term mission trip to West Virginia, will you help?’

‘Do you play softball? We’ve got 3 teams at the church’

‘Our Young Professionals meet every Thursday night for dinner. Would love to have you join us.’

‘Saturday the 20s are going to clean gutters and windows for the widows. Can you help?’ (Rob Hatchet, “Where Are The Future Leaders?” (*The Forest Hill News*, Memphis, Tenn., July 12, 2011).

The above says more than the author may have intended: “The world (through Satan) is very good at meeting social needs....The church needs to be very good as well.” The implication in this statement is that the church needs to adopt Satan’s pattern of meeting social needs. Apparently, that is through such Social Gospel ministries as basketball, softball, dinners, and gutter and window cleaning.

Of Forest Hill’s move into progressive liberalism, Kent Bailey wrote:

Liberalism knows no stopping point. It was the progressive liberal disposition that introduced the missionary society concept and usage of mechanical instrumental music into the worship of God among churches of Christ. Both heresies were followed by open fellowship practices, Premillennialism, and other pseudo movements. During the 1970s the *Community Church Movement* began to grow in popularity. This movement developed from within the protestant denominational churches as a response to the desire of young professionals to secularize the aspect of religious life in America...For

many years the Forest Hill Church of Christ in Memphis (formerly known as the Knight Arnold Church of Christ) was a local church that was very proactive in the war against liberalism and false religion. However, during the past decade a slow progression of change found its way into the Forest Hill church. In 2005 the elders, preachers, and faculty of their preacher training school known as Memphis School of Preaching endorsed Dave Miller and his Eldership Reevaluation and Reaffirmation heresy. In February of 2009 **Barry Grider**, preacher at Forest Hill authored an article entitled *I Got Used To It*. In this article Grider defends the concept of certain elements of change using as an example of becoming reconditioned to accept the singing of the song "Sweet, Sweet Spirit." This specific song advocates a direct influence of the Holy Spirit today. In that same bulletin (February 10, 2009) an article authored by **Tyler Young**, titled, *Binding Where God Has Not*, sought to defend canceling or else rescheduling the evening worship assembly of a local church to accommodate Super Bowl Sunday, missing a weekly service of the church to participate in a sporting event.

Young also sought to defend the practice of willful absence from a Sunday evening service while traveling in addition to that of substituting a small group meeting on Sunday evening in lieu of the worship assembly. All of these elements are taken from the Community Church model (*Defender*, Aug., 2011).

The **Edmond, Okla. church** is another widely influential mainstream church, primarily through its television program, *In Search of The Lord's Way*. Edmond adds vocational-technical training, athletics, and the arts to its operations. These are found on Edmond's website:

In addition to Discovery Bible Study, that continues to provide an opportunity for opening up our lives and God's word with each other, we are launching a MENTORING initiative and SHARED EXPERIENCES initiative. The primary purpose behind these two efforts is to create a platform for moving us closer to Christ and Christlikeness. Find out more about these exciting new efforts and get involved!

Shared Experiences Please check a group that you may be interested in participating in. Below is a brief description of the groups.

ART - Daneille Waldo

This group will meet together once a month and work on a painting project. The instructor will walk members through the steps to create a painting project. Will need to provide your own supplies.

GOLF - Bill Collins

Participants will meet to play local courses.

BASKETBALL - (No name listed)

The group will play basketball in the gym.

HOME REPAIR - Chip Bettes

Learn to do home repair/improvements projects. Also accepting projects that need to be worked on. The group will meet once a month.

DINNER CLUB - Paul Ryckbost

The group will meet once monthly to try new restaurants in the area.

JIU JITSU - David Romero/Shawn McELroy

Grappling/Wrestling... The group will meet once a week.

COOKING - Brent Kucharo

The group will meet to learn a new recipes.

QUILTING - Enid Lollar

The group will meet once a month to work on quilting projects. (**Ladies only group)

BOARD GAMES - Aaron Graffe

The group will meet once a month at the church to play board games. Please bring your favorite snack and games.

Knitting- Ashley Bettes

Auto Repair - Mike Britt/Larry Lutz

Photography - Buck Buchanan

Mountain Biking - Shawn McElroy

Of its Vo-Tech/Arts/Athletics, Edmond says, “The primary purpose behind these two efforts is to create a platform for moving us closer to Christ and Christlikeness.” **God’s** platform for this purpose is His Word (John 6:44-45). Social Gospel programs are **tools of the devil** draped in the mantle of **ministries**. It is beyond inanity to claim they will move men “closer to Christ and Christlikeness.”

These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever. For when they speak great swelling *words* of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, *through much* wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage. (2 Pet. 2:17-19).

Edmond is typical of mainstream churches who have adopted Walter Rauschenbusch’s dictum “...that the Kingdom of God is not a matter of getting individuals to heaven, but of transforming the life on earth into the harmony of heaven.”

Edmond has a Children’s Ministry under the direction of two women ministers. According to their website, “The Children’s Ministry of the Edmond Church of Christ exists as a tool for families to help children grow in wisdom in stature and in favor with God and men.” One wonders how Joseph and Mary were able to raise the child Jesus who “increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man” (Luke 2:52) without a woman heading a Children’s Ministry in Nazareth.

Ministry in the New Testament

There is only **one ministry** mandated for the church in the New Testament. The word “ministry,” translated from *diakonia*, occurs 18 times in the New Testament and **not once** is it used in the plural as the above churches use it. The **only** ministry of the New Testament church is preaching the gospel. Observe the following New Testament uses of *ministry*:

1. and 2. Concerning one to replace Judas as an apostle of Christ: “Men *and* brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus. For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry. ...That he may take part of this ministry and apostle-

ship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place” (Acts 1:16-17, 25).

3. Concerning the apostles’ work and serving of tables: “But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word” (Acts 6:4).

4. Of the ministry of Saul and Barnabas: “And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled *their* ministry, and took with them John, whose surname was Mark” (Acts 2:25).

5. Of Paul’s trials which lay ahead of him, that he recounted to the Ephesian elders: “But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God” (Acts 20:24).

6. In Paul’s report of the Gentiles’ conversion to James and the Jerusalem elders: “And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry” (Acts 21:19).

7. Of spiritual gifts of grace: “Or ministry, *let us wait* on *our* ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching” (Rom. 12:7).

8. Of Stephanas’ labor with Paul: “I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and *that* they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints,)...” (1 Cor. 16:15).

9. Of Paul’s inspired preaching: “Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not” (2 Cor. 4:1).

10. Of the apostles’ inspired preaching: “And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation” (2 Cor. 5:8).

11. Of Paul’s patient endurance of his trials: “Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed” (2 Cor. 6:3).

12. Of the purpose of spiritual gifts in the first century: “For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (Eph. 4:12).

13. In Paul’s charge to Archippus: “And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it” (Col. 4:17).

14. In Paul’s thanksgiving for the Lord’s long suffering toward him: “And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry” (1 Tim. 1:12).

15. Paul’s charge to Timothy as a gospel preacher: “But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry” (2 Tim. 4:5).

16. In Paul’s request for Mark’s presence: “Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry” (2 Tim. 4:11).

The only other instances in which the word “ministry” is found are in Hebrews 8:6 and 9:1. There it is translated from the Greek, *leiturgia*, which *McClintock and Strong* define as, “Public function (as priest) or almsgiver,” from which our English word, “liturgy” is derived. In both of these verses, “ministry” refers to the function of Christ as the mediator of the new covenant and the function of priests under the Law of Moses.

As their fathers did more than a century ago, mainstream churches of Christ are racing along the broad way “that leadeth to destruction” at break-neck speed. We who have lived through, and observed, their departures from the one faith may well echo the sentiments of Philander Green:

I remember well when we had no meetinghouses to dedicate by professional dedicators or successful beggars for money. We had no organs to entertain the congregations, but the natural one the Lord had given to His children. We had no hired boys just out of college to play the clergyman and usurp the authority given to the heaven ordained elders of the church of God. I have lived to see nearly all things we once preached and practiced changed to the modern, fashionable, sectarian practices, where all expedients are used to entertain the people and gain thereby the recognition of the conflicting sects about us, to become popular, and be considered orthodox and really, one of the branches of the church. ...When I became a member of the church almost fifty years ago, I never expected or dreamed that I would live to see the change in doing the Lord’s work, as it is called, that I have seen (“The Testimony of One of the Pioneers,” *Gospel Advocate*, Feb. 15, 1888, p. 12, [cited by West in *The Search For The Ancient Order*, Religious Book Service, Indianapolis, 1950, 2:284]).

We have said it before: The time for recognizing division has come—again. That steadfast, doctrinally sound, remnant of the church, in widely scattered pockets across our land, **must** mark mainstream churches of Christ as apostates. We **must** “have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather **reprove them**” [Emph. JCB] (Eph. 5:11). The multitudinous ministries of their Social Gospel, their flirtation with the world, and their embrace of doctrinal error aims to “gain thereby the recognition of the conflicting sects about us, to become popular, and be considered orthodox and really one of the branches of the church.” **That** is heresy and the Biblically ignorant masses in mainstream churches of Christ are not only bidding God speed to apostates, but are **themselves** apostate.

Chapter Eight

Societies of Mainstream Churches

Departures from the Scriptural pattern of the church in the 19th century were manifested in adding mechanical instruments of music to its worship and establishing a missionary society in its work. These things were not immoral in any sense of the word. They were not inherently sinful, but manifested a sinful attitude in the hearts of their advocates—a failure to respect the Divine pattern of the church’s work and worship revealed in the New Testament.

Alexander Campbell was a proponent of the missionary society long before 1849. His position was rooted in an erroneous concept of the church, as indicated in the following from *Millennial Harbinger*:

In all things pertaining to public interest, not of Christian faith, piety, or morality, the church of Jesus Christ in its aggregate character, is left free and unshackled by any apostolic authority. This is the great point I assert as of capital importance in our great conventional movement or cooperation in advancing the public interests of a common Christianity and a common salvation. My strong proof for this conclusion is that, while faith, piety and morality are all divinely established and enacted by special agents—apostles and prophets possessed of plenary inspiration— matters of prudential arrangement for the evangelizing of the world, for the better application of our means and resources, according to the exigencies of society and the ever-varying complexion of things around us—are left without a single law, statute, ordinance, or enactment in the New Testament (West, 2:169).

Campbell erroneously maintained that local churches are governed by inspiration, but the church universal is not and is therefore free to devise its own plan of evangelism “according to the exigencies of society and the ever-varying complexion of things around us.” No modern change agent could have better expressed that heresy. Exigencies (the needs, demands, or requirements intrinsic to circumstances) of society and its ever changing complexion became his rationale for creating an organization wholly foreign to the New Testament. *Change agents* may be a term coined in our age, but what it describes is much older and described Campbell 160 years ago. Prominent among change agents in the last few decades was Rubel Shelly who called for change based upon the *exigencies of society* and its *ever-changing complexion*:

The church has got to change. If it doesn’t change my kids are not going to stay with it...I’m not about to quit on it. But my children won’t stay with it, if it doesn’t address the issues that are real in their world...Mine was the last generation that would tolerate indoctrination and sit through things we knew were mockeries of the reality we were giving lip service to and tolerate it...My kids won’t (Music, 291).

Both Campbell and Shelly rejected the New Testament pattern for the church. Campbell did not admit rejecting it, but Shelly was bold to **criticize** what he called *pattern theology*. “How do you derive the pattern? Pattern theology has been our undoing. Pattern theology we have learned to generate by a hermeneutic of command, example, and inference” (Music, 301).

Although to a lesser degree than Shelly, Campbell **was** a change agent. Of Campbell’s rationale for the society, West observed:

This is the heart of Campbell’s reasoning on Church Organization. He insists on beginning with the church in the aggregate or universal sense of the term. It is vital to his

viewpoint to ignore, at least for the time being, the local character of the church. It is with the church universal that he begins. Reasoning from the point that the church in the aggregate has the responsibility of converting the world, and that since Christ has given no divine plan for the church, in this sense, to function; therefore the church is left free to devise its own plan, according to its own wisdom, with only the law of expediency applying...To Campbell, it was expediency pure and simple and on that ground could be defended...The weakness in Campbell's reasoning was to be found in his beginning point—the church universal. The church universal had but one set of officers—the apostles, and these were the personal ambassadors of Christ sent on a special mission to supervise the work for Christ in the infancy of His church...when the last apostle had died, the church was known only by the individual congregations scattered over the world. The work of Christ to evangelize was carried on through the influence of the local church in its community. Even in apostolic times the churches felt no need of an organization devised by human planning, through which the church could cooperate to evangelize the world. They had a fervency and zeal, and the history of the church has well shown that the less zeal and devotion there is in the church, the more institutionalism and human organizations are needed (West, 1:169, 170).

The church which Jesus built has no higher organizational structure than the local congregation with Christ as its Head, elders overseeing it, deacons serving under elders, evangelists preaching the Gospel, and members working and worshiping together. It is sufficient in all of its aspects for accomplishing the commission of the Lord to preach the Gospel in all the world (Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:15). The Lord does not need the “help” of men's organizations.

West said Campbell's advocacy of an organization of the church universal for evangelism was “expediency pure and simple.” That concept was, of course, later adopted and enunciated by W.K. Pendleton and opened the floodgate of error, as we saw in chapter two. Since that time, every innovation unknown in Holy Writ has been introduced in mainstream churches on the ground of *expediency*. Those include not only modern versions of the missionary society, but benevolent societies as well. In fact, West, says that was Campbell's goal in the years leading up to the formation of the society in 1849. Just prior to its formation, Campbell wrote: “The purposes of such a primary convention are already indicated by the general demand for a more general and efficient cooperation in the Bible cause, in the missionary cause, in the education cause” (West, 1:171).

West further observed that the arrangement Campbell envisioned was the progenitor of both missionary and benevolent societies of today's mainstream churches.

Up to this time the character of the proposed convention had been very little discussed...The missionary society was but one phase of the organization in which he was interested. He wanted an organization that would be missionary, educational, and benevolent, taking care of all the interests of the church, and not limited to any one interest (Ibid.).

Upon Campbell's reasoning that these were expedients—a position later articulated by W.K. Pendleton—rest the benevolent, education, missionary, and publication societies among mainstream churches of Christ 160 years later. Education societies were covered in chapter six so we now turn our attention to current benevolent and missionary societies.

The societies examined here do not constitute an exhaustive list, but are representative of those

that go beyond the authority of Christ. They are not known in the New Testament, nor is there an example of any of them being instituted among churches of Christ in the apostolic age. Like Campbell's, none of these societies is under the oversight of a local church, nor are they any part of the church of Christ.

A Mainstream Benevolence Society

According to its website, *Churches of Christ Disaster Relief Effort* (CCDRE) is based in Hurst, Texas and described as follows:

The Churches of Christ Disaster Relief Effort immediately responds to any major disaster in the United States, and US Territories by sending truckloads of emergency food, water, cleaning, and other supplies to be distributed to all disaster victims in the disaster area through a local Church of Christ. We are a non-profit corporation, tax exempt from state and federal income taxes under section 501(a) of the Internal Revenue Code as an organization described in section 501(c)(3). The organization has fifteen employees consisting of an office staff, a warehouse crew, and 5 men who travel across the country telling local congregations about the work of Churches of Christ Disaster Relief Effort.

Campbell's society in 1849 operated under a governing board consisting of Life Members and Life Directors who could be so designated for a sum of money. "Life Members were required to pay \$20 and Life Directors were appointed upon payment of \$100" (West, 1:176, 177).

CCDRE also has a governing board and an advisory board. These are listed on its website:

Officers:

John Miller-President

Lester "Buddy" Williams-Vice President

Mike Lewis-Executive Director

Al Daugherty-Treasurer

Mike Morello-Secretary

Board Members:

Michael Crowder, (Church of Christ at Jackson Street, Nashville, TN)

Al Daugherty, (Granny White Church of Christ, Nashville, TN)

Buford Gregory, (Concord Road Church of Christ, Brentwood, TN)

Walter Jenkins, (North Boulevard, Murfreesboro, TN)

Mike Lewis, (Rural Hill Church of Chris, Antioch, TN)

Mike McMurray (Main Street Church of Christ, Springfield, TN)

John Miller, (Allisona Church of Christ, College Grove, TN)

Mike Morello, (Brentwood Hills Church of Christ, Nashville, TN)

Richard "Dick" Nicks, (Bellevue Church of Christ, Nashville, TN)

Glen Rodgers, (Hendersonville Church of Christ, Hendersonville, TN)

Lester 'Buddy' Williams, Jr., (Concord Road Church of Chris, Brentwood, TN)

Advisory Board

Officers:

Richard 'Dick' Nicks-Chariman

Wayne Russell-Secretary

Members:

Riley Clemons, Hart Street Church of Christ, Nashville, TN

James Costello, Vultee Church of Christ, Nashville, TN

Gary Kell, Hendersonville Church of Christ, Hendersonville, TN

Mike Lewis, Rural Hill Church of Christ, Antioch, TN

Wayne Russell, (Antioch Church of Christ, Antioch, TN

According to its website, CCDRE is the benevolence society of mainstream churches of Christ:

Who Supports Us?

Churches of Christ Disaster Relief Effort is supported by Churches of Christ across not only the USA but also its neighbors far and near. We are also supported by individuals and other non-profit agencies nationwide. Many congregations and individuals have CoCDRE in their monthly budget. In 2017, we received financial support from 2,131 congregations in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, plus 1 in Canada. 8,271 individuals/families from 50 states plus DC, Canada, France, India, the Netherlands, and the UK also supported us financially. In addition, many corporations across the country will match the donation gifts of their employees who support us. Some corporations will donate substantial amounts of the items that we provide to disaster survivors.

This private, non-profit corporation not only accepts money from churches and corporations, but asks for money through its website from anyone who will click on the “Donate Now” button on its home page. Its structure and fund raising practices are denominational and have no New Testament authority. CCDRE not only ignores Christ’s authority but has the effrontery to attach His church’s name to a society.

“But it’s an **expedient**,” say mainstream churches who fund it. So said Campbell and Pendleton. Call it an “expedient,” a “method,” a “sack of oats,” a “milk bucket,” or a “baseball bat,” it remains an innovation of man without Christ’s authority as a function of the church. To be an expedient, it must first be lawful, and it is **not** (Col. 3:17; 1 Cor. 6:23).

CCDRE basically performs the same function as the Red Cross and other relief agencies. As a 501c non profit organization, they have a perfect right to do so and that work is commendable. But CCDRE has **no** Bible authority to insinuate that it is a part of, a work of, an arm of, or an organization of the church that Jesus built.

Alexander Campbell’s missionary society in 1849, of which he was the first president, has its counterparts today. Following are two missionary societies currently supported by mainstream churches of Christ:

Great Cities Missions Society

This society has its office located at 3939 Belt Line Rd., Fort Worth, Texas. Some of its background is given on its website:

Great Cities Missions has been sharing the gospel in the Latin world since 1976. We currently have more than 100 families who are now embedded in the lives, communities and churches of the Latin World. These families left behind jobs, homes, extended family, and their countries to share the message of Christ. We not only equip missionaries for their journey through language preparation, team dynamics and urban church plant-

ing strategy, but we are committed to the ongoing care of these families throughout the missionary life cycle. We are available to them every step of the way from recruitment to re-entry into their home culture when they return. Using the Great Cities Missions model of recruiting and training, over 225 congregations are now meeting, teaching and serving the people of their communities. Most importantly, thousands of lives have been changed through Christ.

Great Cities Missions is restricted to one area of the world:

Our Mission

“Sharing Christ with the Latin World.”

Our mission extends further and deeper than planting churches, training leaders and teaching. We have been called to be the hands and feet of Jesus, showing the people of the Latin World what it means to love and be loved unconditionally. As we help meet the basic needs of clothing, food and shelter for these people, we continually see lives transformed as they connect with Christ and experience His love and grace. And, we have the opportunity to see these Christians grow in faith and knowledge as we train them to be church leaders, teachers and missionaries who will carry our mission forward as they continue to spread the Gospel across their communities, cities and nations.

If Jesus has “hands and feet” on earth, they are attached to His spiritual body (Eph. 1:22-23) **not** to a missionary society—an organization unknown in Holy Writ. Like Campbell’s society, Great Cities is overseen by a board of directors and an executive director. That structure also comes from their website:

Executive Director

Kelley Grant

Board of Trustees

Mark Abshier, San Antonio, TX

Roger Loyd, Nashville, TN

Scott Bentley, Amarillo, TX

Tim Maynard, Tulsa, OK

Sue Johnson, Amarillo, TX

Travis McGraw, Midland, TX

David Cartwright, Frisco, TX

Donna Millican, Broken Arrow, OK

Ernest A. Clevenger, III, Brentwood, TN

Dr. John Todd Cornett, Amarillo, TX

Jose Carlos Bianchini Sottomaior, Curitiba, Brazil

Hank Davis, Nashville, TN

Mike Robertson, Amarillo, TX

Bryan P. Flanagan, Brentwood, TN

Dr. Gary Sorrells, Fort Worth, TX

Dr. Craig Gladman, Amarillo, TX
Alejandro Yegros, Asuncion, Paraguay
Michael (Mike) E. Hayes, Franklin, TN
Stacy Stewart, Heath, TX
Sam Johnson, Norman, OK
Leon Wood, Amarillo, TX

Mission Resource Network

This society is headed by Dan Bouchelle who preached for the mainstream/apostate Alameda church in Norman, Okla. in the late 1990s. He left Alameda and moved to another mainstream/apostate church in 2001—Central in Amarillo, Texas. I reported his move to Central in *Seek the Old Paths (S.T.O.P.)*:

One of Oklahoma's premiere change agents/apostates, Dan Bouchelle, is leaving the East Alameda church in Norman and heading to Central in Amarillo, Texas. Bouchelle has been in Norman for 7 years, during which time he was an active member of the Norman Ministerial Fellowship (NMF) headed by St. John's Episcopal Church's "Father" Joe Ted Miller (61).

For the faithful, Bouchelle's rank apostasy was documented in this newspaper article excerpt from *The Norman Transcript* upon his departure:

"As a professional association, we have shared our profession and our faith. Although our church traditions are different, we are all rooted in God," said Bouchelle.

"We have been able to share common things like sermons, study and research, counsel; our day-to-day (routine) is very similar."

Bouchelle has spoken during two of the seven Holy Weeks (the week preceding Easter) that the NMF organizes, something he has enjoyed.

"Typically, a Church of Christ preacher has not done that and it has been a great experience (to try to) change the perception (of the Churches of Christ)," said Bouchelle (A11).

The "perception (of the Churches of Christ)" that he wanted to change brought those churches in Norman into the mainstream in the minds of Norman residents. This apostate now heads the Mission Resource Network (MRN) under the following structure posted on its website:

President

Dan Bouchelle

Board of Directors

Truitt Adair, Lubbock, Texas

Estellene Allen, Garland Texas

Dr. Mark Brewer, Edmond, OK

Justin Chamblee, Alpheretta, GA

Winston Chong, CPA, CFP, SINGAPORE

Dr. Seth Cowan, Tyler, TX

Dr. Brad Crisp, Abilene, TX

Ron J. Holland, Fort Worth, TX
Van Kimbro, Las Colinas, TX
Earl Lavender, PH.D., Nashville, TN
Pat Lawson Dallas, TX
Carol Manley, Sugar Land, TX
Dr. Barry Packer, Dallas, TX
Tebogo Ramatsui, Pretoria, SOUTH AFRICA
Joel Reed, J.D., Atlanta, GA
Dr. Daniel Rodriguez, Malibu, CA
Dr. Michelle Tucker, Dallas, TX
Dr. Vittioro Vitalone, Rome, Italy
Eric West, Midland, TX

MRN has a large staff under Bouchelle. One of those is Marketing Director Ashley Warren. The information from the website reveals a great deal about her, MRN and Dan Bouchelle:

For much of her life, she has been on the front lines of ministry. She now enjoys sharing in the privileges and challenges of ministry with her husband Brent who serves as the Executive Pastor at their church. Together, they have launched ministries for churches in Texas and Tennessee. She is a gifted worshipper (you will regularly see her bouncing on the stage on Sundays) and has led worship on a variety of stages.

Bouchelle is at least consistent by having a woman for marketing director. The Central Amarillo church, where he preached after leaving Alameda, has this on its website:

I will pour out my Spirit on all people. **Your sons and daughters** will prophesy...Even on my servants, **both men and women**, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. ~Acts 2:17-18 (all emphases theirs).

Throughout our long history, this Central church family has always affirmed the equal God-given value of both men and women. As a people, we have been blessed when we hear the hearts of our Christian sisters expressed in song, prayer, and in the reading of God's Word. Now, as one body, we affirm that we should continue doing what we've been doing, and do it even more. We bless and encourage those with the giftedness and desire, regardless of gender, to participate fully in our corporate gatherings. This aligns with our belief that women and men are equally gifted by the Holy Spirit for the edification of the church and the glory of God. We believe this honors our God and helps us better proclaim Jesus as Lord to the people of our city and to those around the world.

These societies, those who operate them, and mainstream churches who support them cannot be called "digressive." They are apostates. A great tragedy is that brethren in our century are wholly ignorant of the all-sufficiency of the church to do the work Christ gave it. For that reason—unlike those of the 19th century—these modern versions prosper without serious opposition.

Societies are unscriptural crutches for vast numbers of Christians in whom devotion to, and zeal for, the cause of Christ is either weak or altogether lacking. West had written that, "...the history of the church has well shown that the less zeal and devotion there is in the church, the more institutionalism and human organizations are needed" (1:170).

West noted that Benjamin Franklin also addressed that point:

...Franklin attempted to get at the very root of the weakened condition of the brotherhood...If the cause was languishing, it was so only because the preachers were not as fervent as they once were. He says, "If preachers lament that the cause languishes, let them cease scheming about some organization unknown to the New Testament, and go into the field and labor for the Lord's sake, and for the Lord's name, as brethren did years ago, and as we are doing now, and as certain as God is the author of the Bible, we shall prosper...Preaching is what is needed, fervent, soul-stirring preaching, exhortations, entreaties and impressive persuasions with the people to turn to God, and be saved." Unquestionably, Franklin was hitting at the real cause. The history of the restoration movement shows that the less devotion men have to Christ the more they stand in need of human organizations (1:212).

The apostolic church neither had nor needed human organizations to fulfill the Great Commission. Nor does the church in any century. The church in the 21st century still has the same divine organization for evangelizing as the apostolic church did and that is sufficient. We have no need for missionary societies.

What **has** occurred in history not only **can** occur again, but usually **does**. The societies of mainstream churches of Christ are but a repetition of 19th century apostasy. "There is no new thing under the sun."

Chapter Nine

The Fellowship of Mainstream Churches

Two classes of mainstream churches of Christ that we defined in chapter one are:

Churches...who have long standing reputations as being “sound in the faith” and wield a great influence among other churches of Christ in their areas, and elsewhere (Rev. 3:1).

Churches who have neither preached error nor fellowshipped those who do and vocally opposed them, but in recent years have developed a different approach to fellowship with mainstream churches of Christ and preachers. Their late approach to fellowship since 2005 makes them *neo-mainstream churches of Christ* and, like their predecessors, they thereby violate of Second John 9-11.

Fellowship between individuals and churches begins and is maintained in gospel obedience. Of the obedient on Pentecost, Luke wrote: “And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42).

Their fellowship with one another was dependent upon continuing “steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine.” Biblical fellowship is first vertical, then horizontal:

This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin (1 John 1:5-7).

In order to have fellowship with one another, each must first have fellowship with God. When individuals have Biblical fellowship with Him, they are in fellowship with each other. The latter is wholly dependent on each individual continuing to walk in the light. When one departs from the light, his fellowship with God is severed, thereby severing fellowship with all others who walk in the light. Others may continue to walk in the light when one departs from it, but if they continue in fellowship with one who has departed, they **also** depart from it as partakers of his evil deeds. They may not approve, practice, or teach his errors, but they sin by bidding him God speed (2 John 9-11).

That is currently the case with *neo-mainstream* churches and preachers. For the past two decades they have developed “a new approach to fellowship” that is foreign to the Bible in order to protect their **sacred cows**. Those are certain periodicals, schools of preaching, well-known preachers, and brotherhood programs. All have a common thread, described by Dub McClish:

A new crisis involving fellowship has now arisen among a host of brethren who have known, esteemed, and worked in close harmony with one another over many years—in some cases, over decades—all of whom once considered each other unquestionably doctrinally sound and faithful. These brethren for the most part had a history of staunchly standing together against the inroads of the blatant liberalism described earlier. They had for years quoted and correctly applied the several clarion passages concerning the limits of fellowship as they preached the Word (Rom. 16:17–18; 1 Cor. 5:1–13; Eph. 5:11; 1 John 1:6–7; 4:1; John 9–11; et al.). The crisis arose from the determination of certain ones of these brethren to support an institution that has admittedly produced

much good material over many years. This institution suffered great damage in 2005 because of a scandal involving its long-time executive director, for which scandal he was dismissed. Events surrounding the clamor to preserve the above-referenced institution in the face of the scandal have exposed a fatal weakness in many of these “sound” brethren—a weakness concerning the practice of Scriptural fellowship. Those bent on supporting and maintaining said institution found themselves on the horns of an uncomfortable dilemma. The newly appointed executive director of said institution brought with him some heavy doctrinal and practical baggage. (Some of his doctrinal errors and practices have been wellknown and fully documented for several years, while others have come to light more recently.) Suddenly (and almost incredibly), those who felt compelled to lend their names to the effort to sustain the institution seemed to forget (at least in regard to the executive director of said institution) the many years some of them had faithfully preached on Biblical fellowship and the many New Testament passages on the subject in their memory banks (37, 38).

Brother McClish identified the common thread running through all of the issues that created a crisis and division between formerly united brethren. The institution he referenced that certain brethren are determined to support at all costs is *Apologetics Press*. The common thread was its “newly appointed executive director,” Dave Miller.

Miller’s errors on elder reevaluation/reconfirmation (Elder R/R) are well documented for anyone who desires to know them at <http://falsedoctrinesofman.com>. Additionally, his false doctrines on Elder R/R, **and marriage**, are documented at <http://jfmiller.com/Shipwreckers/d-miller-info/>.

On April 8, 1990, Miller preached a sermon at Brown Trail in Ft. Worth, Texas to prepare that church for the unscriptural act of reevaluating and reaffirming its elders. Here is an excerpt from that sermon in which he set forth an **additional qualification** for elders to those prescribed by Paul in his epistles to Timothy and Titus:

Not only may a man no longer meet the qualifications, but conceivably a man could meet the qualifications, brethren, and yet not be perceived by that flock as a shepherd. Not be a man to whom they will submit themselves. Shepherds cannot lead where sheep will not follow. So a man could be technically qualified to be an elder, and yet if the membership where he attends does not perceive him a leader in whom they respect and trust, he cannot shepherd effectively. ...What follows then that one of the qualifications of a shepherd is that the membership perceives him to be such, and is willing to submit and to follow to respect and to trust.

The inspired Paul laid down specific qualifications for elders in his epistles to Timothy and Titus (1 Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-8). Dave Miller **added** another—“...one of the qualifications of a shepherd is that the membership **perceives** him to be such, and is willing to submit...” Book? Chapter? Verse? There is none.

Since 2005, Miller has been fellowshipped, defended and supported by such personages as the director, faculty, and staff of the Memphis School of Preaching (MSOP) as well as Robert R. Taylor, Danny Petrillo, Tom Holland, Wayne Jackson, Glenn Colley, Jeff Jenkins, Mac Lyon, Phil Sanders, Barry Gilreath, Alan Highers, Cliff Lyons, Jim Dearman, Roy Lanier, Sean Hochdorf, and Chuck Webster, among countless others.

By supporting and defending Miller, they are bidding him God speed in error. Do any of these

men believe it is permissible to add to God's word? If so, they violate Deuteronomy 4:2, Proverbs 30:6, and Revelation 22:18-19. Will Miller's defenders who direct preaching schools teach their students that God permits presumptuous sin by speaking for God when God **does not authorize him** to do so.

Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you (Heb. 13:17).

When Christians are unwilling to submit to the rule of qualified elders, it is **they**, not the elders, who are unqualified.

Miller's above named apologists, and every other unnamed and/or unknown church or preacher who continues to support him are mainstream johnnies-come-lately and in fellowship with every mainstream church of Christ in the world.

In addition to a first and second admonition rejecting his heresy, Miller received many more, but neither answered them nor repented of promulgating his false doctrines. His only public response was an open letter, entitled, *For Honorable Brethren Who Sincerely Want to Know*. With its distribution, those who were already on his bandwagon claimed he had repented of his errors. But anyone who reads the open letter will **not** find a single word of repentance in it. Here is the letter, reproduced in its entirety, with all emphases his:

For Honorable Brethren Who Sincerely Want to Know

The vast majority of those in our great brotherhood who encounter rumors and hearsay choose to believe the best about their brother, suspending judgment until verification is forthcoming. They sincerely want to believe and hope the best about their brothers and sisters in Christ (I Corinthians 13:7). For the sake of these dear brethren, and in the spirit of Proverbs 18:17 ("the first one to plead his cause seems right, until his neighbor comes and examines him"), I wish to offer a brief word of explanation and clarification concerning the allegations and accusations that are circulating.

"Elder Reaffirmation"

I do not believe in the "reaffirmation/reevaluation of elders" as my critics have defined the concept.

I do not believe that elders should be temporarily appointed and their "terms" only continued on the basis of an arbitrary vote of the membership.

I do not believe that a congregation has the right to use any procedure that expels qualified men from the eldership.

What I do believe is that elders have the authority to solicit from the congregation the congregation's desires regarding who should serve them as elders.

The specific instance at Brown Trail in 1990 entailed a process that was instigated and executed by the elders themselves. The elders appointed Johnny Ramsey, two instructors from the school of preaching, and me to do the "leg work," but it was **the elders themselves that initiated the process and implemented it** from beginning to end. The issue boils down to a single point, illustrated by two questions: (1) Does an elder (or preacher, deacon, Bible class teacher) have permission from God to request the members to give him their feedback regarding whether they think he is qualified to continue to serve and/or perform his job properly? (2) And does that elder then have the scrip-

tural right to decide whether he will remove himself on the basis of the response that he gets from the members? The few passages that have anything to do with the selection and ongoing qualification of officers in the church (e.g., Acts 6:3; 1 Timothy 5:17-20), imply that the congregation has the right to participate in the appointment (i.e., “evaluation”) of their leaders. The process or method by which an individual is deemed to be biblically qualified is not spelled out in Scripture. It is therefore a matter of expediency that falls within the God-granted **authority of the elders**. Those who have turned this issue into their pet hobby are the very ones who are tampering with the authority of elders.

While I am not aware of any unscriptural actions having occurred, I was not in any way involved in a completely separate procedure implemented at Brown Trail in 2002 by a different eldership that was then in place. I had already resigned and was in the process of moving to Alabama. It is astounding that an event that occurred **15 years ago**—an event that I have neither repeated nor promoted since—should cause such a stir!

M,D,R as it Relates to “Intent”

It is unnecessary for me to explain my views regarding what the Bible teaches on the overall subject of marriage, divorce, and remarriage. I have taught on this subject for many years and my views are a matter of public record, having been permanently documented in lectureship manuscripts, school of preaching classes, a tract I wrote on the subject, a section in *Piloting the Straits*, numerous sermons I have preached over the years, articles in brotherhood journals, and television programs recorded for “The Truth in Love.” My views are the same views held by the faithful segment of our brotherhood: one man for one woman for life with fornication being the one and only exception by which the innocent party can put away his/her mate and remarry.

However, several years ago an incident occurred in the school of preaching where I served as director.

One of the staff members was found to have gained entry into the U.S. several years earlier (before he became a Christian) at the behest of his cousin who had concocted a plan by which they would “marry” on paper in order to defraud the U.S. government to achieve his entrance into the U.S. As soon as the conspiratorial goal was achieved, they planned to put through the paperwork to end the “marriage.” When the elders and I became aware of this situation—which had occurred years earlier—we confronted the brother, who acknowledged/confessed the incident and expressed a penitent attitude. The elders then assessed the situation and decided that he would be allowed to continue in his capacity with the school and church. The elders counseled him to rectify these past mistakes to the extent that he was able to do so. They also cautioned him regarding his marital status, but no official pronouncement was made concerning his future eligibility for marriage in view of the fact that he was single and not entertaining any prospect of marriage. The entire affair was laid to rest to the satisfaction of the eldership. Five factors that the talebearers of the brotherhood consistently fail to include in their widespread reporting of this circumstance is (1) the woman who offered to accomplish his entry into the U.S. was his cousin (illegal in and of itself); (2) the two never did anything to indicate that they actually intended to be married or viewed themselves as such (i.e., they did not live together or enter into any relationship or arrangement that could even be remotely construed as marriage); (3) the woman had been married before

and was **not eligible to remarry**; (4) the woman is **dead and has been deceased for many years** (cf. Romans 7:1-3); and (5) he remains unmarried to this day.

Totally separate and apart from this incident which occurred in the 1990s, I was asked by the elders to participate in a Wednesday evening Summer Series program in 2001 in which the preachers of the congregation formed a panel and fielded questions from members of the auditorium class. One question posed the hypothetical situation in which two people conspire to defraud the government in order for one of them to gain entry into the U.S. In a completely off-the-cuff response to the question. I pointed out that there must be mutual intention for a marriage to take place. I gave as an example (poor as it may have been) a situation in which a person is kidnapped and drugged only to wake up days later to find that he is married—with no recollection of having gotten married. He did not consent/intend to be married. [Another example would be Hollywood actors making a movie in which their characters get married. They speak the vows and say everything that would ordinarily be said at a real wedding. Yet no one thinks they actually get married—since their intention is lacking.] These incidents, in which I responded “off the top of my head” in an attempt to offer input on the submitted question have been latched onto and blown all out of proportion to make it appear as if I’ve abandoned Bible teaching on M,D,R and am out counseling hundreds of people to remarry. They claim I advocate that a marriage is not a marriage if either party had “mental reservations” when they married! I categorically deny ever having said, implied, or believed such a thing. My spur-of-the-moment remarks do not contradict my continued belief that two eligible people who are married can divorce only on the grounds of fornication, with the result that the fornicator is not eligible to contract another marriage. Yet, this extremely rare, unusual, unique situation is being held up as a “false doctrine that threatens to undermine the very foundations of marriage”!

May God bless us all in our efforts to be faithful to Him, and to do His work without the distractions of unnecessary division.

Dave Miller

Montgomery, AL 9/23/05

As though sin has a statute of limitations, Miller wrote, “It is astounding that an event that occurred **15 years ago**—an event that I have neither repeated nor promoted since— should cause such a stir!” The passage of time **never** mitigates sin. When Amalek attacked Israel, God told Moses to “Write this *for* a memorial in a book, and rehearse *it* in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven” (Exo. 17:14). More than 400 years later, God fulfilled that promise with Samuel’s command to Saul:

Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I remember *that* which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid *wait* for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt. Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass (1 Sam. 15:2-3).

One can almost hear Agag protesting to Samuel: “It is astounding that an event that occurred more than **400 years ago**—an event that I have neither repeated nor promoted since—should cause such a stir!”

Miller, who wrote *Piloting the Strait* exposing change agents in the church has become one of them. Moreover, he continues to be used and fellowshiped by mainstream churches and

preachers who once publicly opposed his doctrines. They claim that he repented when he issued *For Honorable Brethren Who Sincerely Want to Know*. There is not a line, word, or syllable in that document that indicates any repentance on his part, and we will give \$1,000.00 to any person who can find a statement of repentance in it.

In the wake of the scandal, referenced by brother McClish, an open letter was circulated from the Palm Beach Lakes church in Florida, supporting Miller's new role at *Apologetics Press*. Here is the text of the letter and its signers:

We, the undersigned, wish to announce that we have complete confidence that Apologetics Press is on a firm footing that will insure its continued work of excellence. We commend AP to the brotherhood and recommend that it continue to be the recipient of financial and moral support.

Jody Apple, Tom Holland, Basil Overton, V.P. Black, Dale Hubbert, Kevin Patterson, Maxie Boren, Wayne Jackson, Max Patterson, Ted Burleson, Dan Jenkins, Denny Petrillo, Curtis Cates, Jeff Jenkins, David Pharr, Frank Chesser, Jerry Jenkins, Neal Pollard, Winford Clairborne, Edwin Jones, Jason Roberts, Bill Clary, John Kachelman, Jr., David Sain, Glenn Colley, Andy Kizer, Paul Sain, Marlin Connelly, Drew Kizer, Phil Sanders, Jim Dearman, Scott Lambert, Billy Smith, Earl Edwards, Roy Lanier, Jr., Lonnie Smith, Raymond Elliott, Mac Lyon, Robert Taylor, Barry Grider, Gary McDade, Allen Webster, Dennis Gullede, Don McWhorter, Chuck Webster, Ronnie Hayes, Joseph Meador, Dan Winkler, David Hester, James Meadows, Wendell Winkler, Alan Highers, Tom Miller, William Woodson, Sean Hochdorf, Hardeman Nichols, Gary Workman.

Every person who signed that letter either was—or is—a member of a mainstream church of Christ who would probably not **preach** error, but remains in fellowship with Dave Miller. Lines were drawn by many others who had not signed it and preachers and churches, who formerly condemned Miller's doctrines, eagerly jumped onto his bandwagon. They sundered fellowship between those who opposed his doctrines and themselves who "had for years quoted and correctly applied the several clarion passages concerning the limits of fellowship as they preached the Word (Rom. 16:17–18; 1 Cor. 5:1–13; Eph. 5:11; 1 John 1:6–7; 4:1; John 9–11; et al.)."

One of the signers was Robert R. Taylor who published a book on fellowship in 1980. In the chapter dealing with common misconceptions about fellowship, he wrote:

There are those who contend that fellowship should be extended to any person who has been immersed for the remission of sins regardless of any false doctrines he may have espoused subsequent to his baptism or any ungodliness of lifestyle which may currently be his. But this goes squarely against the inspired directive of John who laid down the inspired imperative for current fellowship extended to another. He wrote succinctly, 'If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin' (1 John 1:6-7)...A man can be immersed in water for the remission of sins at one point in life and later become "an heretick" or "factious man" in later life (Tit. 3:10). Neither the Spirit of truth nor Paul had much patience with such for every false teacher was to be rejected if he remained impenitent subsequent to a first and second admonition. Paul further describes him by affirming, 'Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being con-

demned of himself' (Tit. 3:11). That does not sound like Paul is commanding Cretan Christians to overwhelm such a known and persistent false teacher with the beautiful bands of Christian fellowship does it? (*The Bible Doctrine of Christian Fellowship*, 1980, Taylor Publications, Ripley, Tenn., pp. 40, 41).

For the Annual Denton Lectures in 1994, Taylor wrote:

It is difficult to figure out some of our brethren in their inconsistent actions. They will bemoan the liberal spirit that is capturing large portions of our once uniformly conservative brotherhood. Yet on a continuing and even increasing basis they will appear with them on lectureships, workshops, seminars, and other occasions. It would be wonderfully courageous and highly commendable if they went to unmask their errors and uphold the Truth with militant majesty; yet this they do not do as a general rule... 'Birds of a feather flock together' is not just true of winged fowl; it has a spiritual application as well. Brethren who constantly associate with false teachers, never confuting them have not yet learned to hate every false way (Psa. 119:104, 128; Rev. 2:6). Yet they want to maintain a reputation for soundness. Such is extremely hard to attain and then maintain while giving tacit endorsement to liberalistic forces (*Annual Denton Lectures, Studies in Joshua, Judges, and Ruth*, 1994, pp. 528, 529, Ed. Dub McClish).

Robert Taylor joined the mainstream ranks in 2005 and has tacitly endorsed Miller since. "Thou therefore that teachest another, teachest not thou thyself?" (Rom. 2:21).

All of the foregoing represents the **central issue** within churches of Christ—**fellowship**. It is generally maintained by neo-mainstream churches and their preachers that one may have scruples against what are clearly unscriptural practices and doctrines, but continue to fellowship those who preach, practice, and adopt them. That philosophy was expressed by one preacher who said, "I have friends on both sides of the issue." Straddling the fence is very hard, especially if it is a barbed wire fence of doctrinal error. Fence straddlers are modern Jehoiakims who have excised 1 John 1:5-7 and 2 John 9-11 from the New Testament (Jer. 26:22-24).

West said the wave of liberalism that swept away churches from the mid 1800s until 1880 was "a period of intense trial" during which **fellowship** became the central issue:

Men arrayed themselves up on the various issues, but the question that now forced its way to the front demanding serious attention was that of fellowship. Many had taken the position that the use of the instrument and the missionary society were wrong, unscriptural and sinful. But, it became evident by 1880 that many churches were going to use the instrument and support the missionary society anyway. ...Whereas one group insisted the instrument was wrong, the other insisted it could be used. Could fellowship remain?

The question forced its way upon the church. There were those who had formerly strictly opposed instrumental music whose opposition subsided. J.B. Briney had stood vigorously behind the opposition to the instrument, but now wavered. So did Joseph Franklin, son of Ben Franklin. What happened with these more prominent leaders happened to many less known. Others remained loyal to old convictions. If instrumental music were sinful, there could be no fellowship with it, and ten million churches using it would not make it any more right than it had ever been (2:163).

J.W. McGarvey opposed mechanical instruments in worship but continued to fellowship churches and preachers who used them through that period. He finally concluded—albeit it too

late—that his fellowship with error was futile.

In January, 1902 or 1903, I was preaching for the Pearl and Bryan Streets church in Dallas. Brother McGarvey, an old man at the time, was invited to speak at the Central Christian Church in Dallas. We had three men in the Pearl and Bryan Streets church who had graduated from the College of the Bible in Lexington, under Brother McGarvey, and they were great admirers of him. They suggested that we invite Brother McGarvey to preach at Pearl and Bryan that night. We did so. I was just a boy of 24 or 25 then. I was sitting by the side of the great old man on the front seat, waiting for the service to begin. As we sat there talking, Brother McGarvey said to me: ‘Brother Sewell, I want to say something to you, if you’ll accept it in the spirit in which I mean it.’ I told him I’d appreciate anything he had to say to me. He said about these words, ‘You are on the right road, and whatever you do, don’t ever let anybody persuade you that you can successfully combat error by fellowshipping it and going along with it. I have tried. I believed at the start that was the only way to do it. I’ve never held membership in a congregation that uses instrumental music. I have, however, accepted invitations to preach without distinction between churches that used it and churches that didn’t. I’ve gone along with their papers and magazines and things of that sort. During all these years I have taught the truth as the New Testament teaches it to every young preacher who has passed through the College of the Bible. Yet, I do not know of more than six of those men who are preaching the truth today.’ He said, ‘It won’t work.’ That experience has been an inspiration to me all the days of my life since. It has helped me, when I was ever tempted to turn aside and go along with error, to remember the warning of this great old man. (Jesse P. Sewell, “Biographical Sketches of Restoration Preachers,” *The Harding College Lectures*, 1950, Searcy, Arkansas: Harding College Press, 1951, pp. 74-75.)

The Memphis School of Preaching, the Forest Hill elders who oversee it, MSOP’s administration, faculty, and staff have consistently refused to publicly oppose Miller’s errors and have remained in fellowship with him. Had MSOP opposed Miller’s doctrines after 2005 it would have lost large sums of money from some of its wealthiest contributors and its prestige among mainstream churches of Christ.

We have seen school administrators betray faithful brethren and loyal friends in order to placate certain contributors to their schools. We are also aware of brethren who at one time faithfully exposed and opposed various errors in doctrine and practice (and blushed not to name their perpetrators), but who abruptly ceased doing so. These not only grew silent concerning certain errors (e.g., elder reaffirmation/reconfirmation), but they began pronouncing said error harmless and endorsing and embracing its principal perpetrator. They have gone so far as to say now of the error they once opposed, “It is not worth dividing the church over.” (By this statement they imply that they still consider it to be error, but just not “serious” error. They are also implying that those who **do** oppose it **are** guilty of dividing the church.) Instead of continuing to confront this error and its chief advocate in the church (who continues boldly to say, “I would do it again”), several brethren have compromised not only their former convictions, but the Truth of God’s Word. If the elder r/r practice constituted doctrinal and practical error from April 1990 until early 2005, what caused it no longer to be error after that time? If that doctrine and practice no longer constituted error after the spring of 2005, what rendered it unauthorized before that time? [Emph. DM] (McClish, “Stand Fast or Compro-

mise” www.thescriturecache.com).

MSOP/Forest Hill’s endorsement of Miller drove a wedge between brethren who once walked in fellowship. Many who opposed Miller’s false doctrines publicly expressed opposition to MSOP’s fellowship with him. Among them were Ron Cosby, Harrell Davidson, and I who spoke on the Phillips Street Lectureship at Dyersburg, Tenn. in April, 2006.

The Phillips Street elders had oversight of the Online Academy of Biblical Studies (OABS) of which Tom Bright was the director and we were instructors. During the lectureship, we asked for a meeting with Bright and the elders to express our concern that OABS carried Forest Hill on its website. In the meeting, we strongly urged elders Bobby Diggs and Edgar Shults to cease carrying Forest Hill on their website as it implied endorsement of them, Miller’s doctrines, and The Gospel Broadcasting Network.

The influence that MSOP/Forest Hill had (and has) over mainstream churches was evident when one of the elders said, “If it wasn’t for Memphis, where would we get our preachers?” Where did preachers come from **before** there were schools of preaching? Many of them came from men’s training classes conducted by churches like Winner Road in Independence, Mo. where I received instruction from Bruce Veteto in 1956-57.

Winner Road’s elders understood Paul’s instruction to Timothy: “And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Tim. 2:2). That was long before MSOP became an untouchable among mainstream churches of Christ.

Following the lectureship, we went home and waited for some word or action from Phillips Street. None ever came. Two months later, I wrote a letter to the Phillips Street elders, again imploring them to cut their ties to MSOP/Forest Hill:

June 22, 2006

Elders Bobby Diggs and Edgar Shults
Phillips Street church of Christ
912 Phillips Street
Dyersburg, TN 38024

Dear brethren,

First, let me thank you for the fine hospitality you extended to Sherlene and me during your annual lectureship. It was a joy and a pleasure to be with you, and it is an honor to be an instructor in the Online Academy of Biblical Studies. The work done through this effort is unparalleled in the history of the church on the North American Continent and only eternity will reveal the good that may come from it.

Relative to the work of OABS and the website provided by you good brethren, I am deeply and profoundly concerned that the Forest Hill church in Memphis remains on the OABS website after they have embraced and supported the Gospel Broadcasting Network and the teachers of error who are carried on GBN. The fact that MSOP/Forest Hill are still carried by OABS compromises the convictions of those of us who have marked them as being in fellowship with false teachers such as Dave Miller. I personally have no fellowship with Memphis School of Preaching, nor the Forest Hill church and cannot have such so long as they defend Miller and his false doctrines. Second John 9-11 forbids bidding God speed to errorists. Those of us who have marked them as en-

dorsing errorists are now being compromised as long as they continue to be a part of the OABS website.

The consequence of continuing to carry Forest Hill/MSOP on the OABS website may be far-reaching and serves to dilute any good that OABS may accomplish. I humbly implore you brethren to remove them from the website so long as they continue in fellowship with Miller and GBN. This is a serious matter of conscience with me.

After our meeting during the lectureship, I had high hopes that MSOP/Forest Hill would be removed from the website. It is still not too late for you brethren to take a firm and godly stand in this matter and I pray that will be your course of action.

Your brother in Christ,
Jerry C. Brewer

They never replied or acknowledged receiving my letter. Phillips Street refused to leave the mainstream and continued their fellowship of MSOP/Forest Hill and MSOP's director.

Brethren Cosby, Davidson and I later terminated our relationship as teachers with OABS for two reasons: 1) Phillips Street's refusal to cut ties with MSOP and, 2) Retaining Miller apologist Robert Taylor as one of their instructors.

To the day of his death, MSOP Director Curtis Cates remained in fellowship with an unrepentant false teacher and refused to publicly condemn his error. He had the same problem J.F. Rowe had a century and a half earlier

A serious division was threatening and Rowe shrank from it. He firmly believed instrumental music was wrong, but how to continue to fellowship advocates of it was a problem the full force of which he never met. Uncertain sounds came from him. A small organ, he declared, was permissible, just so it was not a large one (West, 2:163).

In 1880. Rowe **knew** that a mechanical instrument was not authorized by the New Testament but refused to condemn it outright. In 2005, Cates **knew** Miller's doctrines were false but refused to publicly condemn them outright.

I signed a letter for Apologetics Press to continue. I do not apologize for that. We have several of our students who are connected with Apologetics Press, and have been. And, I have confidence in, uh, they're doing a great job in fighting atheism, Islam, you name it, denominationalism and this type thing. Now, Am I brother Miller's press secretary? No. But I would encourage you to talk to him, and find out what he says (Open Forum, Sunny Slope church of Christ lectureship, Paducah, Kentucky, July 15, 2006).

That had been Cates' mantra throughout the previous year. He first expressed it at a meeting of *The Gospel Journal Board* of Directors, July 20, 2005. In that meeting, Dub McClish asked brother Cates about his implicit endorsement of Dave Miller by signing the AP "Statement of Support." Cates said that he did not endorse any of brother Miller's errors, but he did support the continuation of *AP*. Brother McClish replied that he did not see how one could support one and not support the other. Cates **admitted** that Miller taught error but continued to lend his influence to him.

In the late 1800s, J.W. McGarvey opposed the organ in worship but remained in fellowship with churches who used it. There is no new thing under the sun. What Jesse P. Sewell wrote in 1902 described McGarvey's influence then and the influence of Cates and his fellow travelers more than a century later.

Professor McGarvey may speak out against instrumental music in the worship, as he does, and say things against it that those who refuse to use it would hardly say; but what do the people who want the instrumental music care about this thing so long as he gives his influence almost entirely (except in his home congregation) to those who use it? Brother McGarvey believes that instrumental music is wrong, and so teaches; still, he gives his name and influence to a paper that advocates its use and associates with churches that use it (except at home and possibly on a few other occasions). So, while he believes and teaches that the thing is wrong, there is not a church in the land that uses it that will not today point to Brother McGarvey as “one of the strong men on our side.” His influence goes with his fellowship, not with his faith and teaching (“Wouldn’t Stand for the Organ,” *Gospel Advocate*, Vol. XLIV, No. 49, Dec. 4, 1902, p. 77, Cited by West, 2:442).

Curtis Cates’ influence went “with his fellowship, not his faith and teaching” and arrayed him against every passage of scripture prohibiting fellowship with false teachers.

He used his influence to smear the good names of brethren who opposed Miller’s errors because he feared losing financial support for MSOP. His unyielding defense and endorsement of Dave Miller marks Forest Hill as a mainstream church of Christ. Cates’ influence was a major factor that created division in the body of Christ 14 years ago.

Forest Hill/MSOP is another wreck littering the road that we have traversed in the last 180 years. It has become the paragon of compromise by its “new approach to fellowship.”

Leroy Brownlow said, “The most important thing is not whether you are in the mainstream of the fellowship of the church, but whether you are in the mainstream of **the faith**” (“The Preservation of the Faith”). Forest Hill’s elders, Curtis Cates, MSOP’s faculty, staff, and administration chose the mainstream of the fellowship of the church.

Chapter Ten

Mainstream Periodicals

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.thescriturecache.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 cooperation 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 unwholesome 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

sinate 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. That 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 provoked 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 authorized 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 signalled 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, 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 compromise 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 Brazzwell'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 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 every-one 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 always, 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 where-with one may edify another” (Rom. 14:19).

The Gospel Journal will cover topics found 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 who led in ousting McClish and Watson and whom Scaggs idolized.

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.”

Chapter Eleven

Newsletters of Mainstream Churches

Churches of Christ have historically utilized every mass medium to carry out the Lord's charge to preach the gospel. Those include radio, television, the internet, and newspapers. But the most distinctive medium is the weekly bulletin, owned and published by the church itself. From its inception, the weekly church bulletin was primarily a teaching medium to lead people to the Lord and edify the church. To a great extent, it has always been the most distinctive public representative of the local church. Bulletin readers who were not Christians learned the truth about the plan of salvation, the character of the church, and its unique Bible based nature.

Over the years that has all changed, as many are now designated **newsletters** instead of bulletins. That subtle change in mainstream church publications signalled a significant evolution in those churches' character—from Bible evangelism to a Social Gospel character; from a **spiritual** to a **social** emphasis. Most no longer carry articles to teach the Gospel or to edify and strengthen the church. Instead, they are filled with events of a social or entertaining nature, announcements of missionary and benevolent society works, men's, ladies, and youth activities, and congregational meals.

A look at their websites reveals that mainstream churches' newsletters/bulletins typically follow the pattern as described above. It is not necessary, nor is it feasible, to cite all of their bulletins. The following are representative examples indicating their social character. Some of them occasionally toss in a Scripture reference (often in a meme), but they generally omit any articles giving a distinctive sound. In fact, they could all be printed by any mainstream denomination and no one would know the difference.

None of the following carried an article designed to teach the lost or edify the church. Instead, they emphasize social activities.

1. From the bulletin/newsletter of the Northridge church of Christ, Shawnee, Okla. (all caps and bold, theirs):

Share Groups Today

There is a **Wedding shower** today for **Slaten Barnett and Lorin Barnhouse** from 2:00 to 4:00 in the West Wing. They are registered at Walmart, Kohls and Target.

Family Promise returns today!

Sign-up to serve.

Prayer Partners will meet Monday night at 6:30pm in the West Wing.

Wednesday Night Classes for all ages!

Starting at 7:00pm

Women –Amazing Place

Men – To Live is Christ

Wed Night Refuge – Food @6pm

Mark Your Calendars

Apr 15 – 22 Family Promise

Apr 22 – Mission Shawnee Meal

Apr 28 – Mission Shawnee Basketball Tournament

May 23 – H.S. Senior Night

June 9 – Clothing Giveaway

For WiFi – Northridge Guest

Password – northridge

Family Promise Volunteer Appreciation Banquet

Tues, Apr 24, @ 6pm at the Citizen Potawatomi Nation Cultural Heritage Center.

Address: 1899 S Gordon Cooper Dr.

Lost and Found

Have you lost track of your Bible? Please check the lost and found area over the coat rack in the hallway and see if yours is one of the many Bibles and/or other things that have been left.

52nd Annual Christian Women's Workshop will be Saturday, April 21st at Southwest Church of Christ. See women's bulletin board in hall by West Wing for more info.

Blue Cups

The CARE ministry (Sunday morning door greeters) has been going quite well with SHARE groups taking turns serving. It is also our intention to follow up each Monday-Tuesday with quick, simple visits to Sunday visitors who provide information.

With each visit of a "glad you came" nature, we give a blue Northridge coffee cup. If you would help with this on occasion or want to know more, please check with Cliff or Wayne G.

Seminar in Children's Ministry

"Coaching, training, resources, rejuvenation." May 10-11 at Oklahoma Christian University. Coordinators, teachers, helpers check it out at www.oc.edu/cmseminar or contact Barbara.price@oc.edu. Maybe someone, or more, can go get fired up and return with ideas and helps (April 15, 2018).

2. From the bulletin of the Faith Village church of Christ, Wichita Falls, Texas, April 14, 2019 (all caps and bold theirs):

Sunday, April 28, **7:00 pm – 8:00 pm** Spaghetti Dinner in the Family Center after evening services. All donations go to FV kids.

Children's Ministry & Christians

Under Construction (CUC)

Bible Hour – Tonight at 6 pm

LTC Bible Bowl – Today at 4 pm

LTC Puppets – Today at 3 pm

LTC Chorus – Today at 2 pm

All LTC Participants – Please pay attention to information from your coordinators about next

weekend's convention & possible extra practices this week.

LTC Final Practices – Wednesday, April 17, at 6 pm. We will meet to quickly practice each event together.

Today - April 14 Youth Devo: 7 pm at David & Karen Jones's house. Students need to bring desserts. A van will be provided for transport.

April 17 - Hangout & Dinner: from 4 -7 pm

April 28 - Youth Local Area Wide: leave from youth center at 4:30 pm

3. From the Glenpool, Okla. church of Christ's bulletin. Aug. 18, 2019 (all caps and bold theirs):

YOUTH UPDATES

Youth Devo - Today @ Hallsted's for 6th-12th Grades. The bus will leave church after evening services and return at 8:30PM. Girls bring pop and guys bring chips or dessert.

Bowling - Sunday, August 25, more details to come!

DRILLER'S GAME—FRIDAY, AUGUST 23RD Join us at a Driller's game! All are invited, the more the merrier (discount after 20 people). Sign up sheet on the bulletin board.

4. From the Granbury, Texas church of Christ's bulletin, Sept. 15, 2019:

Wednesday Night Diner – 5:00-6:15pm, in the Fellowship Center. This week's menu includes C&J Brisket Sandwich, Chips, Salad Bar, Cookie and Drink for \$5. Chicken nuggets are also available for \$1.

Don't forget! GCOC Ladies' Day – Saturday, September 21, 10:00am – 2:00pm at the Granbury Church of Christ. Kay Turner, of Fort Worth, will speak on *Defying the Odds*. Lunch will be provided. (**Please note:** Participants are asked not to wear perfume or cologne due to the severe allergies of some who will be attending.)

Everyone is invited! 5th Sunday Singing and Prayer – September 29 at 5:00pm in the Worship Center. This time of devotion is designed to bring together Christians of all ages to praise our Lord. Please join us for this special time of worship!

Piecemakers Quilting Bee – Monday, September 30, 10:00am to 2:00pm in Room 8 at the church building. We work as a group making quilts for various needs. For more information, contact Betty Curbo (817-573-7535) or Jamie Skelton (817-279-3724).

First Sunday Welcome Lunch – The Elders and the Path-Finders, Climbers, and Faith-Builders classes invite guests and new members who have placed membership since October 2018 to be their guests for lunch in the Dining Hall of the Fellowship Center on Sunday, October 6, right after the 10:15 worship service.

Children's Ministry

LTC Parent Meeting – Sunday, September 22, in Room 5, immediately after the morning worship service. For parents of new or returning students in grades 3-12 who are interested in participating in LTC next year.

Christmas Musical Meeting – If your child is in grades K-5 and would like to participate in this year's Christmas musical program, there will be a brief parent meeting in the Parlor on Sunday,

September 29, at 9:50 (right between class and service). We will discuss the rehearsal schedule and hand out scripts and CDs.

Together

Welcome To Granbury Church of Christ

Have you experienced the aching longing to belong and to be a part of a *family*? Have you ever felt completely alone, wondering if things could ever change? The need to belong is as primal as our need for food and shelter and is part of what makes us human. God created us with this inborn need and designed the church to be a place where that need can be fulfilled. The church is not a building. It's a community of people brought together to experience God's love and purpose, people who are committed to knowing and following God and doing life together. Through thick and thin, these are the friends who stay by your side.

Maybe you don't have anyone in your life. Or maybe you're around people all day long, but still feel alone. God wants each of us to find a place of belonging in His family. The prayer of the Granbury Church of Christ is that you will find that place of belonging with us.

5. From *Family News*, bulletin of the Seminole, Okla. church of Christ, Oct. 6, 2019 (all caps and bold theirs):

Youth and Family

Growing Together Luncheon:

On October 13th we will have a lunch concerning our children's bible classes, which will take place right after A.M. worship. We would like to invite all current teachers and also anyone who may consider teaching in the future. So if teaching is something that interests you PLEASE come!

Trunk or Treat:

Trunk or treat will be on Halloween night this year which is a Thursday. We will start at 5pm and end when we are over it. We NEED TRUNKS. There will be a sign up for people to commit to decorating their vehicle. There will be a moon-bounce, hay ride, FREE FOOD and more!! Come have fun!!

AWTG: The next Area wide is the 13th of October at Southwest in Ada. We will leave at 4pm!

Game Night:

October 12th is Game night! We want to highly encourage our families to start coming and having fun! Josh and his family will be there and we will have family friendly games going on!!

Parent Meeting:

ALL of our parents with children are asked to attend a quick meeting with Josh after A.M. services on the 20th. It will take no longer than 10 minutes!

6. The following are from bulletins of the Second and Adams church of Christ, Elk City, Okla. Each is documented by date:

Mark Your Calendars

June 26th– Summer series Jarred Pettijohn

June 23rd-28th-Ark Trip, leaving this Sunday at 8am.

June 30th– Special Contribution

July 3rd– Youth 7th-12th grade. Hot Dogs and Fireworks. Bring any fireworks you would like to set off! At the home of the Carnes.

July 8th-11th-QMCC Day Camp. Camp is open to Kindergarten thru 3rd grade. Register online at QMCC.org

July 16th– Food Pantry

July 29th-August 1st– VBS– Living By Faith– story of Daniel

July 28th– MEM and VBS work day

ANNOUNCEMENTS

EWES CAMP FOR GIRLS June 30th– July 5th - If you are interested in attending. There is a brochure on the bulletin board (June 23, 2019).

YOUTH NEWS

Church Camp registration is now open! Focus week at QMCC is open to all 4th-12th graders. It will be June 9th – 14th. Go to qmcc.org and fill out the registration for session 2. The church will be paying for all attendees, so make sure you do not pay online. Please let Jon know once you've registered.

QMCC Day Camp registration is now open! July 8th-11th. This camp is open to all kindergarten-3rd graders (May 19, 2019).

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

September 29th

Sunday night live at the P Bar Farms Corn Maze in Hydro. It starts at 5 and the van will leave at 3:30. All youth and parents are invited.

October 4th-6th

The MOVE Conference. Please sign up as soon as possible.

October 16th-20th

Beach Retreat– Galveston \$75. per person If you need help with the cost please contact Jon. Also if you would like to donate to help a teen attend the Beach Retreat please see Jon or the church office. (Sept. 15, 2019).

MARK YOUR CALENDARS (sic)

June 6th-Teen youth group trip to OKC Zoo \$20 each

June 12th– Summer series 2019, guest speaker Johnie Fredman

June 12th– Tipton Grocery truck will be here.

June 9th-14th– Focus week at QMCC. We will meet at 1pm Sunday to leave.

June 15th– Ladies Day at the Burns Flat Church of Christ-speaker Celine Sparks “In the Garden of Prayer” See bulletin board for more info

June 16th– Elkwood Devo

June 18th– Food Pantry

June 23rd-28th-Ark Trip

June 30th– Special Contribution

July 8th-11th-QMCC Day Camp. Camp is open to kindergarten thru 3rd grade.

July 29th-August 1st– VBS, work nights will be July 2nd, 11th, 18th, and 23rd-26th

July 28th– MEM and VBS work day (June 9, 2019).

These items from mainstream churches of Christ represent but a small sampling of what multitudes of their “bulletins” have become. They are valueless in teaching the lost how to be saved or to edify those who **are** saved. They have become social club newsletters extolling accomplishments and activities of members from pig shows to athletics, drama, musicals, Halloween Trunk or Treat, July 4th fireworks, Easter egg hunts, beach retreats, camps, ladies’ days, quilting bees, ball games, children’s ministry seminars, puppet shows, basketball tournaments, banquets, ad infinitum.

Mainstream churches have discarded their distinction as the church Jesus built and taken their place as another denomination among all others. Their bulletins/newsletters reflect their metamorphosis from spiritual entities to Social Gospel practitioners and mark them as apostate.

Few people have probably ever heard of Beverly Francis Carradine (1848-1931). According to Wikipedia, Carradine was, “an American Methodist minister and a leading evangelist for the holiness movement. The patriarch of the Carradine family, he was the grandfather of actor John Carradine and great-grandfather of actors David, Keith, and Robert Carradine. He was ordained a Methodist elder in 1878.”

Carradine was active in denominational religion when the Social Gospel was taking root in the late 1800s and observed its secular nature among the sects of his day—particularly the Methodist Church. Carradine vigorously opposed the Social Gospel and in 1891, voiced his opposition in a short book entitled, *Church Entertainments, Twenty Objections*. Even a denominational preacher in those days could clearly perceive the danger of secular trends in religion—something our own brethren cannot now grasp. He described one class of those who revelled what he called “entertainments” as, “thoughtless people who plunge into anything and almost everything without a single inquiry. It is a small matter to them whether they attend a monkey-show or a revival meeting. These persons are well known in every community and every church” (8).

Carradine’s description fits mainstream churches of Christ who fawn over their programs, events, games, ministries, meals, ladies’ days, and retreats. One of his 20 objections to church entertainments was that,

...it is a misconception of the mission of the church. The church was never sent to entertain men. Certainly of all labors this would be the most difficult as well as the most thankless of undertakings. Ten thousand thousand theaters, lecture and concert halls, and other places of amusement are attempting this gigantic task. Actors, lecturers, readers, clowns, buffoons, humorists and mountebanks of every description are daily and hourly grappling with the work in profound uncertainty, each time, whether there will be success or failure, whether they will be greeted with clapping of hands or groans and

hisses. O how glad I am that this impossible, undignified and unprofitable toil is not laid on the Church of Christ! I look in vain all through the Scripture for the slightest authority or command in any direction. It is not there (23, 24).

Unlike Pendleton and his progeny, Caradine **understood** the church's mission and the necessity of Scriptural authority for it to act. This denominational preacher understood what mainstream preachers cannot, or will not! He did **not** deem **any aspect** of the Social Gospel as an expedient.

In his third indictment of "church entertainments" he catalogued the religious social events and programs extant in his day those of mainstream churches of Christ in ours:

This whole idea of entertaining the people at God's house comes from Satan, and is one of the most subtle and dangerous of all his movements upon and against Christianity. He knows that if Christ is held up before the people, and men look steadily at Him, they will be saved. Hence, his idea is to divert the church from doing this wise and heavenly, and powerful and saving thing. He whispers that Christ alone is not enough to draw souls; that it takes Christ and jokes, Christ and lectures, Christ and entertainments. As he discovers his success in blinding the church, he becomes more aggressive, and whispers again that, if the naked cross be held up—the simple, strict, holy life of Jesus be insisted on—then all the young people will be driven away. That young people are young people, and must be amused and old people have to be entertained, and entertainment must be provided. So he tempts, and so he has succeeded in thousands of instances, in side-tracking the church. He has switched her off from the one blessed heavenly employment of crying, "Behold the Lamb," and she is now part lyceum, part theater and part kitchen. As you pass her doors to-day you will hear the name of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Emerson, Tyndall, Darwin and others far more frequently than the name of Christ; while, instead of sobs and cries of "What must I do to be saved?" you will be greeted with clapping of hands, rattle of plates and bursts of uproarious applause (27).

The entertainments Caradine recounted are part and parcel of today's mainstream churches of Christ with which they fill their bulletins/newsletters. Having exchanged the fountain of living water for the Social Gospel's broken cisterns, they merrily fiddle their way down the broad way "...like unto children sitting in the marketplaces, who call unto their fellows and say, We piped unto you, and ye did not dance" (Matt. 11:16-16).

Chapter 12

Mainstream Youth Ministries

Denominations have always been experts at attracting youth. Central to that are their special “youth groups” identified by catchy acronyms like the MYF (Methodist Youth Fellowship) or CYO (Catholic Youth Organization). In The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) it is the CYF (Christian Youth Fellowship). In recent years, mainstream churches of Christ have had to play “catch-up” to their sister denominations’ youth-baiting efforts. That led to an explosion of youth ministers on their payrolls.

Additionally, mainstream “Christian” colleges found a new market by adding “Youth & Family Ministry” to their degree programs. Thus, a new office was added to the church that neither Jesus, Peter, Paul, Titus, nor Timothy ever knew—“The Youth Minister.” Of course, they never knew about youth ministry because it was borrowed from denominations—a program first initiated in the 1800s:

The beginnings of youth ministry were in the mid-19th century, in the wake of the industrial revolution. Churches took note of all the young men who moved into central urban areas to work in factories. Laypersons who noticed these young adults working six days a week and gallivanting about town on Sundays, aspired to educate them.

After World War I, the focus of many youth ministries began to shift from outreach and conversion to education and understanding of faith. It was during this time that teenagers began to think theologically as well as gain a social awareness of the world around them. From the 1930s to the 1960s, the churches emphasized fellowship and theological understanding.

The 1940s was also the beginning of parachurch ministries. Young Life was founded by Jim Rayburn in 1941. The Young Life parachurch model proved to be effective at reaching young people and by the early 1950s, parachurch youth ministries with full-time staff flourished. Billy Graham was the first full-time parachurch worker for Youth for Christ (YfC) in the USA. This movement spread quickly around the world.

During the 1950s, parachurch ministries grew rapidly in most Christianized countries, and the focus of activity was on large events, known as Rallies, and stadium events, known as Crusades. The emphasis was on promoting inter-church activities (between local denominational churches)—mainly in the format of youth rallies—the type of stadium events made popular by YfC.

Denominations stopped publishing youth group (Sunday School) resources and large group gatherings dwindled down into small meetings and then into nothing. Then specific church-based activities for youth emerged, as Friday night youth groups began.

During the 1970s, many denominations implemented strategies for modernizing existing youth ministry in the hopes of reviving it. This is the point where differences in youth ministry started to emerge on a denominational basis instead of organization to organization.

During the early 1980s, the counseling revolution hit the church with its emphasis on honesty and openness. Professional counsellors began to be employed in churches. This influenced youth groups and the Bible study meetings became “fellowship groups” or “home groups” with an emphasis on caring and meeting people. It was also during the

1980s that a large number of local church youth pastors began expressing the desire to stay in youth ministry as a lifelong career (Wikipedia).

“Youth Ministry” is a growing and lucrative component of mainstream churches who are being fed by colleges with graduates sporting degrees in “Youth and Family Ministry.” A mainstream church that does not have a “Youth Minister,” either on its payroll or as a volunteer, is a rarity and many of them are women. Here is a small sampling of mainstream churches’ youth programs and youth ministers from their websites:

Muskogee, Oklahoma Church of Christ

We want every student at MCC to know Jesus, live for him daily and invite their friends to know Jesus with them. Our desire is to grow in faith and love for one another. There are plenty of opportunities to get involved during both the school year and the summer, including small group Bible study, devotionals, weekend activities, retreats, summer camp, mission projects, and much more (www.mccweb.org)

Dripping Springs, Texas church of Christ

Parker LaGrange is a 2018 graduate of the Bear Valley Bible Institute in Denver, Colorado. Parker has had a heart for Youth and Family Ministry for a very long time now and is excited to be working to do everything he can to bring souls to Christ and strengthen the faith of our young people. Parker is married to Amanda LaGrange and the two of them are very passionate about making Youth Ministry as Biblical and fun as it can... (www.dschurhofchrist.com)

Cabot, Arkansas Church of Christ

T.J. Davidson is our Minister to Families with Teenagers. T.J and his wife, Tessa, have been married since 2006 and have two daughters, Eden and Hannah. He graduated from Harding University in 2006 and began working at the Cabot Church of Christ in 2008. “This is not just my church family, this is my family. I love the people here and it is amazing to see the work that God is doing here.” (www.cabotchurch.com).

Clear Creek Church of Christ, Hixson, Tennessee

Mitchell Halstead -Middle School Minister. Mitchell was born north of Houston, TX and considers himself blessed to have spent his first nineteen years living in the same community and attending the same church where his father ministered for over 25 years. He and his eventual wife Kayla met in youth group and later attended Abilene Christian University, where he earned a degree in Biblical Studies with a focus on Youth Ministry (www.clearcreekcoc.org).

Niceville, Florida Church of Christ

Under “Children’s Ministry”

We are committed to embracing all children individually, nurturing their spirit and guiding them toward discovering and creating a personal relationship with God (www.nicevillechurchofchrist.org)

Leander, Texas Church of Christ

Alan Gower - Youth Minister

I began serving the Leander Church of Christ as the Youth Minister in March of 2012. Prior to coming to Leander, I served as the Youth Minister at the Elliott Street Church of Christ in Breckenridge, TX as I continued my studies at Abilene Christian University. I

graduated from ACU in 2008 with a Bachelor's Degree in Youth and Family Ministry and then again in 2011 with the Master of Divinity degree (www.leanderchurchofchrist.org).

Auburn, Alabama Church of Christ

Matt Tignor, Youth Minister

Matt arrived at Auburn Church of Christ as the Youth Minister in July 2008. Before his arrival in Auburn, he served as Youth Minister in Kingston, Tennessee. Matt is a graduate of Harding University with a degree in Youth and Family Ministry. Matt has served as an intern at Central Church of Christ in Athens, Alabama, Central Church of Christ in Huntsville, Alabama, and Twickenham Church of Christ, Huntsville (www.auburnchurch.org).

Del City, Oklahoma Church of Christ

Youth Minister - Jonathan "Monk" Juarez Jonathan is our Youth Minister at Del City. He grew up in the small town of Celina, Texas where his passion for ministry first started. While there, Jonathan receive the nickname "Monk", short for monkey, for his incredible climbing skills. He then went off to attend Oklahoma Christian University where he graduated in 2017 with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Youth & Family Ministry. He works with our students in the 7th-12th grades. He loves talking about Jesus, movies, sports, and music (www.delcitychurch.org).

Elmwood Church of Christ, Layfayette, Indiana

Youth and Family Minister

Phil Travis began working with Elmwood as our Youth Ministry Intern in the summer of 2006. He graduated from Rochester College with a Bachelors degree in Youth and Family Ministry and joined our staff as an Associate Minister in May 2007. He became the Campus Minister at Elmwood in May of 2008 and transitioned to our Youth and Family Minister in July of 2013. Phil has a passion for encouraging students to explore their faith and establish their own beliefs. He believes that youth and family ministry should be relational, educational, and missional (www.elmwood-church.org)

Edmond, Oklahoma Church of Christ

John Frias joined the ministry team at Edmond prior to the summer of 2016. After serving as the graduate assistant in youth ministry for two years, John's ministry expanded to a full-time role as youth minister in February 2019. In this role, John works alongside Jeremy, youth deacons & sponsors, and parents to minister to students in 7th-12th grades...John is passionate about his faith and excited to help teens grow in their faith. He enjoys watching movies, writing papers, and hanging out with his wife (not in that order!) (www.edmondchurchofchrist.com).

Una Church of Christ, Nashville, Tennessee

John Green, Youth Minister

John is a high school teacher and football coach at Lipscomb Academy. John is married to Jennifer and they have two boys, Daniel and Luke. Jennifer and John have a passion for teaching and leading youth (www.unachurchofchrist.com).

The woeful plaint is often heard that "The church is losing its young people." Here is a bit of news: The church does **not have** any young people. The church did not bring them into the world and the church is not charged with rearing them. The Lord left those things to **parents**.

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. and God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth... (Gen. 1:27-28).

And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4).

The aged women likewise...that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home. good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed (Titus 2:2, 4-5).

No where in Holy Writ can be found a syllable authorizing the church to assume the God-given responsibilities of parents.

The Niceville, Florida church says, “We are committed to embracing all children individually, nurturing their spirit and guiding them toward discovering and creating a personal relationship with God.” God told fathers to “bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” And the ashdodic language, “a personal relationship with God” is not part of that. Does anyone even know what that means? From Pentecost in Acts 2 through Revelation 22, one will search in vain for any church of Christ that had a “Youth Minister.”

Let me tell you about a “youth minister” that I knew many years ago. He and his wife were good people who loved the young people in their charge. They entertained them, taking them to amusement parks, on fishing and hunting trips, to zoos, and on numerous other outings..

This youth minister had a keen sense of right and wrong and instilled that into his young people. He taught them that they should give a day’s work for a day’s pay, always tell the truth, practice common courtesy in all their relationships, and respect God, their elders, and the property of others.

His wife was his faithful co-worker. She regularly prepared meals for the young people, and she and her husband were more than willing to give the young people rides to school. In fact, they encouraged all of them to get an education and saw to it that they were in worship on Sunday morning and on Sunday evening and Wednesday evening.

But there were some unusual things about this youth minister. He never finished high school, had no degree in “Youth and Family Ministry,” and did not even begin his youth ministry until he was 30 years old—far beyond the age when he should have been able to “understand” the problems of young people. Stranger still, he was not even a member of the Lord’s church at that time. He actually administered spankings to the young people who misbehaved, but no one ever accused him of “child abuse” for meting out corporal punishment. He once spanked one of the young people for lying and told him he would receive that kind of punishment a lot more quickly for lying than he would for telling the truth. Another time, one of the young people stole some items from another person’s yard. The youth minister promptly took the young man to the house where they had been stolen, had him return them and apologize to the family from whom he took them.

His methods were admittedly unorthodox by today’s standards, but this youth minister was somewhat successful. He served in that capacity for 28 years before he was baptized into Christ at the age of 57. No church would have hired a youth minister with his credentials—even if he had been a Christian for those 28 years. He and his wife nurtured

those young people into adulthood and every one of them became a Christian. One of their young people today is a song leader and another is a Gospel preacher.

Now I am sure that youth minister's wife had a great deal of influence on his decision to become a Christian, and I know she had much influence over that group of young people. When that youth minister died in 1979, his young people were gathered around him with their children and watched as he slipped away from the toils of this life.

His name was Clyde, but his young people called him "Dad." Fulfilling his duties as a father, he would have scoffed at the idea of having someone called a "Youth Minister" employed by the church to "train" his children. He took care of those matters according to Paul's injunction (Eph. 6:4). May God give us more "youth ministers" like Clyde Brewer (Brewer, *The Gospel Journal*, 21).

Luke recorded the Lord's progress from a child to adulthood in these words: "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and, in favor with God and man" (Luke 2:52). Within this verse is a child's proper four-fold development:

1. Mental (wisdom).
2. Physical (stature).
3. Spiritual (in favor with God).
4. Social (in favor with man).

This verse prioritizes a child's proper development. It begins at birth, teaching and instilling wisdom in the infant. It continues in the physical development, then spiritual development and finally social relations. That formula is for **parents** to rear children—**not** the church

Too often, parents prioritize the physical, social and mental and neglect the spiritual. They shuffle kids off to athletics as soon as they can toss a ball, emphasize their popularity among peers, then hand them over to public schools to propagandize them. Then, if there is any spiritual development, kids are handed to mainstream "Youth Ministers" for a few "devos" some Bible classes, puppet shows, and food, fun, and fellowship. One wonders how Joseph and Mary were able to raise Jesus from a child without a "Youth Minister" in Nazareth.

The church owes young people the same thing it owes everyone else in the world—preaching the unadulterated Gospel of Jesus Christ for the salvation of their souls (Rom. 1:16-17). The church is not charged with providing special programs for diverse groups, whether pre-schoolers, elementary students, high school or college groups. To create "positions" in the church to cater to different groups is not authorized in the New Testament and is denominational to the core.

The church is not the home and the home is not the church. Each of those divinely established institutions has a function within its own sphere. Neither may usurp the function of the other, but the church does that when it presumes to rear and train children. Another mainstream example is the Westside Church of Christ in Norman, Okla.:

Westside Kids

Four Key Questions:

Who? Westside KIDS is geared toward children ages 0 – 5th grade and also their family (sic).

Why? The mission of this group is to provide the **platform** for growing your child's relationship with God.

Where? The "destination", after providing growth opportunities through Westside KIDS, is a healthy transition into the Westside Active Youth (6th-12th grade).

What? We accomplish our mission through the use of Biblical education/instruction, fun and engaging activities and service projects.

Here are some examples:

Vacation Bible School (Camp Kurios)

Summer Camp

Back to School Bash

Treat Yo Self (Parents' Night Out)

Trunk or Treat/Fall Carnival

Westside KIDS Serve!

Westside KIDS Christmas Party

Westside KIDS Family Devotionals

...and more! (www.westsidechurchofchrist.org).

Large numbers of these youth groups' activities center around trips, food, fun, games, and entertainment to attract young people. In Nov., 2002, the Custer Ave. church in Clinton, Okla. sponsored a concert for area youth at their high school gymnasium by a group called *Vocal Union* and mass mailed invitations to area churches. When we received the announcement I went to *Vocal Union's* website and sent a message to singer Steve Camping. asking him about their religious affiliations. He replied by email:

Jerry,

"Thanks for checking out the website! Hope you liked the music on there, we are constantly out touring the country, keep your eye on the tour schedule...we may get to your neighborhood soon. As for your question on my church. I live in Reno, NV and go to a small non-denominational community church here. To tell you the truth, we have a rather diverse church background amongst our members, we have Church of Christ, Seventh Day Adventist, CMA, Christian Reformed....its amazing what God is doing in our group and the harmony we continually find in Him. I hope this answers your questions. Keep God the main focus of your life and you will never go wrong!

In Him, Steve C (Email message, Nov. 6, 2002)

After receiving Camping's reply, I mailed about 40 letters to area churches in Oklahoma and Texas (including the Clinton elders) warning them that Vocal Union's members were denominationalists. I did not receive a single reply in defense of that spectacle performed by Seventh Day Adventists, Mennonites and members of "The Church of Christ." What I **did** receive was criticism for not first going to the Clinton church before mailing the letters.

Matt. 18:15 is a favorite sugar stick of liberals when their errors are exposed: "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone." If that was the basis of their criticism, they abused and misused that verse. The focus of the Lord's teaching is on a **private** matter between brethren, **not** public dissemination of error. If Matt.

18:15 meant what liberals say it means, Jesus needed to go to the Pharisees privately before condemning their errors (Matt. 23). The legs of the lame are truly unequal.

Whatever draws people (youth or otherwise) to the church is what keeps them there and entertainment gimmicks are the bait in mainstream churches.

Young people need the same thing older folks need—the gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:16-17). The gospel is still God’s power to save and the Word of God is still bread and water for the soul—for the young as well as the old. It is still able to edify (Acts 30:32) and give life (John 6:63).

Children need homes where the word of God is revered and Christ is honored. Only in that way will they be prepared to meet the trials which shall surely come in their lives. The late G. K. Wallace painted a picture of his own youth in which spiritual matters needed no gimmicks or recreation to hold his interest.

Church life was important. We did not know that there was such a thing as an alternate plan for Sunday than to go to church. We were taught to start planning on Saturday, shining shoes, etc., for Sunday. We traveled to church in a wagon, or on horseback. The older boys rode a horse, except me, and I rode a mule named Peanut. ...For two years I attended church in Belcherville, Texas, and worshiped in the home of Joe Reeves. There were only six for worship. When the Lord’s Supper was over, sister Reeves would clean the table and we would have lunch. I was the only young person there. I was the young people’s class, and no gimmicks were needed to keep me going to church (Wallace, G.K., *Autobiography And Retirement Sermons*, 1983, High Springs, FL, Mary Lois Forrester, pp. 4, 5).

Without gimmicks or recreation provided to him by the church, G.K. Wallace matured to become a faithful gospel preacher, educator, and defender of the faith. Twenty-first century youth need the same thing youth needed when Paul penned the Ephesian epistle in the first century—**parents** who will bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

On the other hand, the home has an obligation to the local church. Parents must teach their children to love God, His Word, His Son, and the church for which Jesus died. They must teach them fidelity to the Lord and His church and the importance of worshiping and working according to the New Testament pattern.

Young people’s interest in the local church mirrors that of their parents. Mothers and fathers who allow worldly things to take precedence over spiritual matters in their lives will have children who do the same. Many times families leave small churches that are sound in the faith for larger mainstream churches, saying, “We want our kids to be with other young people.” Many of those we have known even drive several miles to a neighboring town because they believe it is the church’s responsibility to “provide something for the young people.” And mainstream churches are good at that. If having “our kids to be with other young people” is the standard for where families worship, they could as easily save the drive and attend a denominational church in their own town. Denominations are even better at entertaining youth and differ nothing from mainstream churches of Christ.

Let the church be the church and let godly elders watch for souls as they who must give account to the Chief Shepherd at the last day. Let them shepherd the young, as well as the old, who are in their care, and let parents be what God intends for them to be. Let them lead their children in righteous ways, so that it may be said of them as it was of Abraham: “For I know

him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment...” (Gen. 18:19).

Epilogue

The church is the kingdom of Christ (Matt. 16:18-20). It is eternal and transcends all things temporal. Its laws, ideals, subjects, and mission are heavenly. Jesus so declared in His trial before Pilate:

My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence" (John 18:36).

Having an eternal nature, the church's mission differs from the kingdoms of men. It is neither social, political, national, nor racial. Social engineering is not its province, nor did Jesus give his life for racially balanced congressional districts. He didn't die to provide everyone a minimum wage, Aid to Families with Dependent Children, food stamps, the right to vote, medicare, social security, job security, affirmative action, human rights, aerobics classes, quilting bees, Easter egg hunts, food pantries, gymnasiums, trips to Six Flags, "Church Camps," colleges, pre-school day cares, or free eyeglasses.

The mission of mainstream churches of Christ is defined not by the New Testament, but by The Social Gospel. It is political socialism hidden beneath attractive robes called "ministries." It emphasizes the here and now of man's existence. It focuses upon his physical needs to the neglect of his spiritual needs and rejects the Lord's commission to preach the Gospel of salvation.

The Social Gospel is more concerned with social security than eternal security and social welfare than spiritual warfare. Its humanistic priorities are gerrymandering of congressional districts rather than preaching the soul saving gospel to a lost world, and psychoanalysis and counseling instead of heart-pricking sermons. Its adherents have exchanged the Bread of Life for loaves and fishes, the Water of Life for broken cisterns of human philosophy and eternal glory for thirty pieces of silver, paid at minimum wage. Its agenda is temporal from top to bottom and its structure rests on the shifting sands of social relationships ("our church family") rather than the Rock of salvation.

Every mark of the Social Gospel is found in mainstream churches of Christ. To anyone whose eyesight is clear enough to see through a ladder or a chicken wire fence, the things we have documented brand their practitioners as mainstream, Social Gospel, churches of Christ and prove the reality of two separate brotherhoods.

A Parting Word on Colleges

In the final chapter of his second volume of *The Search for the Ancient Order*, West had this to say about colleges' influence among churches of Christ:

The oft-repeated statement of Sommer's that the colleges were the beginning points of all digression probably would not bear up under more thorough investigation...Colleges, as a general rule, have not fostered the thinking of brethren on certain issues, but rather have reflected the opinion of the majority after the issues have arisen. Consciously or unconsciously, this has been the tendency. The reason is clear: colleges must have money to operate and if they get too unpopular, they will not have enough funds to run (461).

West's second volume was published nearly 70 years ago in 1950. What he wrote of colleges was generally true in that time. Colleges operated by brethren in 1950 **were** dependent upon money from members of the church. That was their life blood. All of that has changed in the

last seven decades.

About 45-50 years ago, the colleges began to apply for, and receive, accreditation from regional college accrediting agencies. Along with accreditation came requirements for their professors to hold advanced degrees, and a certain number to have PhDs. To fulfill degree requirements for professors, the colleges looked to institutions of higher learning that granted them. Among those were denominational universities. Thus, schools like ACU, OCUSA, DLU, FHU, et. al., began hiring professors who had been fed at the slop troughs of human philosophy and religious error.

It is beyond ironic that A.G. Freed and N.B. Hardeman, would not be qualified to teach today in the school they founded and which bears their names. Nor would David Lipscomb be qualified to teach in the school bearing his name.

Accreditation also required financial endowments so colleges began courting corporate sponsors and other sources of money for endowments. Most of them today are endowed with millions—money that came not from brethren, but from corporations and private foundations. They are no longer beholden to members of the church for their money and therefore have little regard for what brethren think about their operations. It no longer matters if colleges “get too unpopular” with brethren. They don’t need their money. That has contributed, in a huge measure, to colleges thumbing their noses at faithful brethren and pursuing their love affair with mainstream churches of Christ with which they are “affiliated.”

The cycle of apostasy might be summed up in a paraphrase of Hebrews 11:32-39: “And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of” Judas, the disciples who “went back and walked no more with Him,” Hymaneus and Philetus, Alexander the coppersmith, Phygellus and Hermogenes, Demas, Diotrophes, the church in Pergamos, the church in Thyatira, the church in Laodicea, Galatian Judaizers, contentious ones in Corinth, Jesse B. Ferguson, B.B. Tyler, A.B. Jones, Alexander Proctor, J.H. Garrison, W.T. Moore, Joseph H. Foy, R.C. Cave, R.H. Boll, Roy Cogdill, Reuel Lemmons, Lynn Anderson, and every other apostate whose shame is displayed across the pages of history.

The cycle has come round again and soldiers of the cross must confront it or die in it. In 1889, Alfred Ellmore surveyed 19th century apostasy and his advice is germane in the 21st century:

This leaven of unrighteousness has been twenty-five years in gathering its mass of corruption. And like the man of sin, whom it serves, it has come in the garb of righteousness, hence the deception...Good men have wept and prayed over the matter, hoping that it might be only a transient cloud, and would soon dissipate, but in this they were disappointed. Like Catholicism and Mormonism, and every other ism, it is growing, and will continue to grow, as an eating cancer, and unless we *cut it out* the body will be ruined [Emph. his] (West, 2:433).

As it was more than 100 years ago, the time has come **again** for the faithful to make known their separation from those who have already left the old paths, have no fellowship with them, and cease the pretense that they are still a part of the church Jesus that built.

While we remain true to the principles on which we started out, there is no earthly power that can impede our progress. But the day we leave these walls and go out to take counsel with the world, will mark the day of our decline. We have nothing to fear from without. Our only danger lies in the direction of indifference and compromise. While

we are true to God in the maintenance of these principles, the divine blessing will be upon our work. But should they ever be surrendered, ruin will as certainly follow as that the Bible is true (F.G. Allen, "It Came to Pass," *Gospel Advocate*, Dec. 23, 1896, p. 54 [cited by West, 2:463]).

By rejecting God, Israel suffered 70 years of captivity, but a remnant under Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah restored the temple, the law, and the walls of Jerusalem. When the liberal/progressive movement decimated the church in the 19th century, the remnant moved across the tracks in their communities, built cracker box meeting houses, continued to worship according to the New Testament pattern, and preach the Gospel. They rebuilt the shattered walls of spiritual Jerusalem and multitudes were drawn by their simple Gospel message.

That is what the faithful remnant must do in our century. There are yet 7,000 who have not bowed the knee to the Social Gospel and the church will not only survive but thrive under sound preaching by them.

The church, in its history, has weathered many storms. When the calm returns, we may be a smaller brotherhood, but we will be a stronger one for the hardships we have experienced. For all of our warnings concerning liberalism, modernism, permissiveness, worldliness, and apostasy, if the world stands, we confidently believe in good days ahead. The church may be smaller in size for having lost many to these evil forces, but it will be a faithful and spiritual body. God has always had a pruning process, whether in response to His commands regarding discipline, or in the natural order of things whereby men leave us due to having already left us in the spirit (1 John 2:19). Nevertheless, in the turmoil used by Satan to take men away, the body of Christ is cleansed. One reason we believe in good days ahead is the conviction that men can tire of their own filth, in time. That can happen in a nation. A society can cut loose its moorings into an abyss of degradation and depravity. Given time, though, it can happen that finally the basically good people can sicken of the filth around them, and come to say, "That's it! No More!" They can begin to take corrective action. We believe such will take place, if the world stands, in the church of the Lord. Already in some places brethren have decided that gimmickry is not spirituality, and some are crying out, "Why can't we have Bible in our classrooms and from the pulpits?" They will—those with real spirituality that is—come to see what is really the work of the kingdom, and also to see that the church is not a "fun house" where everything is geared to our pleasure. Rather, men who are spiritual learn to take their pleasure in the things pleasing to God. Many will see loved ones lost forever, and many parents will perhaps be shaken in realizing that they have lost their children before there is that awakening. But in time, it will come...We believe good days, while perhaps yet years away, will come. Finally, brethren will realize what has been said all along: "the gospel is the power of God unto salvation!" (Rom. 1:16) (Jackson, 1).

If the apostles returned today, they would not recognize a single mainstream church as belonging to Christ. They have left the "mainstream of the faith" to become mainstream churches. Their candlesticks were long ago removed. If we are to remain faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ we have but one course:

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And

what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty (2 Cor. 6:14-18).

The “**when**” is **now**!

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