

## *The Dave Miller Statement Issued 9/23/05...And Continuing Controversy*

### **THE NECESSITY OF EXPOSING ERROR**

Jesus warned of false prophets who would come in the innocent garb of sheep (Matt. 7:15). Paul cautioned the elders of the Ephesian church about the “grievous wolves” that would enter among them, “not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them” (Acts 20:29-30). The loving apostle John wrote saying “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits, whether they are of God because many false prophets are gone out into the world” ( 1 John 4:1).

Exposing error and false teachers has never been a pleasant task. Yet it is a necessary one. God’s faithful messengers have always been called upon to expose the false doctrines of men (Isa. 58:1; Tit. 1:9-11). Some, rather than to reprove, rebuke and exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine (2 Tim. 4:2), would preach the smooth things (Isa. 30:9). While Jude would have preferred to write about the common salvation, he found it necessary to exhort the brethren to “contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3).

God has placed his “watchmen” upon the walls of spiritual Zion to warn the wicked that they might be saved (Ezek. 3:17ff; 2 Tim. 4:1-4). Gospel preachers and godly elders have a responsibility to sound out the warning before digression and apostasy overrun the people of God (Tit. 1:9-14; 1 Tim. 1:3). This sometimes involves exposing error (Eph. 5:11), marking those who cause division and occasions of stumbling (Rom. 16:17), and sometimes it necessitates rebuking folks publicly (1 Tim. 5:20; Tit. 1:13; Gal. 2:11). Many, however, who should be watchmen, have grown blind, ignorant and have fallen asleep!

“His watchmen are blind, they are all without knowledge; they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; dreaming, lying down, loving to slumber” (Isa. 56:10).

Far too many preachers and elders in the Brotherhood are like these dumb watchdogs that cannot bark! If a watchdog can not or will not bark, of what good is he? To further complicate matters, often these “dumb dogs” attack the very ones who are courageous enough to speak out against sin and error within the church. Oh how they can then bark about the “judgmental and unloving” attitude of those “keepers of orthodoxy” and “church regulators.” One is reminded of an article that appeared in a newspaper a few years ago. While two thieves burglarized a house, the owner’s big old watchdog lay in the shade and watched! When the police arrived, the watchdog attacked them, and the burglars escaped!

Preachers and elders need to wake up and watch! They need to sound out a warning against sin and error. They need to identify and mark the false prophets who ravage the flock of God (Rom. 16:17-18). Today, perhaps more than ever before, we need watchmen on the walls of spiritual Zion who will lift up their voices like a trumpet and cry out against wickedness (Isa. 58:1). --Dan Flournoy

### **APPLICATION**

As we look at the situation at Brown Trail over the past five years, it seems to this writer that there were those who sought to gain control of the Preacher Training School for their personal aggrandizement. Dave Miller systematically eliminated the core faculty and replaced it with part-time instructors. He turned over much of the control of the school to Everett Chambers a recent graduate of the PTS. Cultish practices began to be reported by students in the PTS. (Read [Kevin Yeck’s letter](#) for a “tip of the iceberg” view). An, “in your face” type of discipline emerged. (See [Dave Miller’s policy](#) distributed to the students, [Don Simpson’s](#)

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contract). Three faithful watchmen, Daryl Barker, James L. French and Jimmie McKenzie tried to make corrections and were continually thwarted. (Read the documents on this website that demonstrate Dave's contempt for the authority of elders).

Three additional elders, Guy Elliott, Eddie Parker and Phil Pope were added in January 2002. These three, along with Bobby Watts, ignored the clear evidence that things were wrong in the PTS. They, like the dumb dog in the above article, refused to bark out a warning. Instead, they turned on those who were trying to do what watchdogs are supposed to do! In an effort to save Dave's job a plan was formulated to oust the other three elders.

First, there was a concerted effort by three deacons, Ed Allen, Kevin Kogucz, and Brian White to undermine these three elders who opposed Dave Miller. They interviewed numerous individuals trying to ascertain if anyone had ought against these three elders in particular. In so doing, they sowed discord by placing doubts in the minds of many in the congregation regarding Barker, French and McKenzie.

Next, a plan to reaffirm the elders was set in motion. Dave Miller called a meeting of some thirty hand picked men to give them his side of things. (For Dave's view, read his resignation letter on this website). Included in this meeting were four of the seven elders, Eddie Parker, Guy Elliot, Phil Pope and Bobby Watts. The only defense given by the four elders for attending such a meeting was that "we didn't act on anything discussed at the meeting." The implication is clear: Dave wanted them to act on something!

The congregation was then asked to evaluate the elders. They were not given any reason as to why this was necessary. Part of the congregation, however, had been involved in the meeting that Dave Miller called. In essence what happened was that the congregation was asked to sit as a jury and render a verdict on each of the seven elders. Since the "jury" had already been tampered with, the outcome was pretty well guaranteed. As it turned out, two elders, Jimmy McKenzie and Daryl Barker resigned before the final "vote." The third was forced out by elders who had resigned one Wednesday night and then reinstated themselves the next Sunday with the help of their preacher, Maxie Boren.

Charges were made against James French including the charge that he was contentious and sowing discord. When brother French tried to answer the charges, Maxie Boren told him he couldn't speak because he had spoken the previous Wednesday night. (No wonder brother French called Maxie a preacher-ruler!) No charges had been made against brother French on the previous Wednesday night and he had every right to speak to the congregation. Now, the only way brother French has to defend himself and to answer their false charges is by way of this web site. Maxie has called the web site despicable. What is despicable is the ungodly way he and the four remaining elders treated brother French and others who stood in opposition to their cover-up of Dave Miller and Everett Chambers.

What is the result of all this? Dave Miller has moved on to greener pastures working for Apologetics Press. Everett Chambers continues to pursue his career in law school. The church at Brown Trail has been split to the point that those remaining are ashamed to publish the attendance figures. (The first six months of 2002 the average attendance was over 500. Now, as we approach the end of 2002, the average attendance is close to 300). Members who left Brown Trail have been scattered among about eight different congregations. They are happily working for the Lord and contributing to the growth of the Kingdom. They have discovered that there are indeed sound congregations in the area! Those who have left Brown Trail have been characterized as "leaving in a huff." Well, they didn't leave in a huff. They left with broken hearts! These members were not trouble makers. Some had been members at Brown Trail over thirty years. It was not easy for them to leave. They simply could not tolerate a leadership so obviously in error.

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The damage that has been done by those bent on upholding the cultish practices of Dave Miller and Everett Chambers may never fully be known. However, those who take the time to read the documents on this web site can see that what brothers Barker, French and McKenzie were trying to do was exactly what godly elders are suppose to do, **warn the brethren!** They simply stood up and called for repentance on the part of those who brought erroneous and divisive practices into the church at Brown Trail. They call for repentance on the part of those who continue to cover up sin in the camp.

Brothers Barker, French and McKenzie led no faction. They upheld no man. They simply stood for Truth! Their only purpose was to protect the flock of God. Even **now**, they only call for repentance on the part of those who have taught and practiced that which is contrary to the word of God (Rom. 16:17-18). **Now**, they are simply marking those who have brought cult practices and division into the Lord's church at Brown Trail. Exposing error is not an option, it is mandatory! Thank God for godly watchmen on the walls of spiritual Zion. -DF

## **AN OPEN LETTER REGARDING THE TAKE OVER OF THE BROWN TRAIL CHURCH OF CHRIST**

by Dan Flourney

*Minister of Education/Evangelism at Brown Trail from May 15, 2001 to Oct. 4, 2002 and Assistant Director of the Preacher Training School from June through September, 2002.*

I am writing this open letter because duty demands it (Rom. 16:17-18). I am writing this letter because brethren who continue to support Brown Trail and her works deserve to know the truth. I am writing this letter to help vindicate other preachers and teachers at Brown Trail who have been falsely accused. I am writing this letter because I have been falsely accused by the four remaining elders at Brown Trail. In a letter dated Dec. 4, 2002 they made several false charges against me. Some of these have already come back to me from brethren in churches where I might find employment.

An Open Letter to the Elders at Brown Trail  
Guy Elliott, Eddie Parker, Phil Pope, Bobby Watts

You have wrongfully accused me of several things that I am sure you are spreading to others. Your method of operation has been to denigrate anyone who would not go along with your cover-up of Dave Miller and Everett Chambers in their treatment of students in the Preacher Training School. Therefore, I am answering your false accusations by means of this open letter.

You have accused me of opposing you behind your back. This is absolutely false. My opposition to your actions regarding the reaffirmation of the eldership, my opposition to your meeting in secret with Dave Miller and others to plan the ouster of your fellow elders was never hidden. I did nothing behind your back. I confronted you with these matters and dealt with you directly regarding them as soon as I was made aware of them. You admitted to me that you attended this meeting but continue to defend it saying, "we didn't act on anything."

You have charged that I was in alliance with those who were fomenting discord in the congregation. Your definition of sowing discord evidently is that if anyone differs with your handling of the situation he is sowing discord. When you set about to take over the eldership

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through secret meetings and deception, **you** were in alliance with those who were in fact systematically going to members of the congregation to poison their minds against three elders with whom you disagreed. On the other hand, I was not going to the congregation at all. The brethren who left Brown Trail did so after seeing your conduct. A few (less than a dozen) came to me for information regarding the process of reaffirmation and to ask about what was going on in the PTS. I told them the truth. Yet, you label me a “trouble maker.”

Your preacher, Maxie Boren pleads your case in his nine-page letter of November 20, 2002 saying, “What else could we do?” and “We did the best that we could.” He makes no mention of Dave’s secret meeting and your conspiracy to get rid of three elders who were trying to get Dave to repent. What else could we do? Why not call the entire congregation together and let each side state their case? Why call for a reaffirmation of the elders and then tamper with the “jury” secretly? Maxie would have the brotherhood believe that this was just an internal matter regarding a divided eldership and therefore nobody’s business. Well, brethren who contribute thousands of dollars to Brown Trail projects deserve to know that the leaders have underhandedly usurped the authority of the eldership. The elders who were forced out in such an ungodly fashion were men who were trying to correct sin in the camp.

You have said that you kept me on full salary because you did not want to hurt me and have indicated that my receiving a salary while in opposition to you is dishonest. Well, this is plainly not true. The Sunday the four of you went forward to “confess,” you called me in to ask if I was “on board” and “are you happy?” I told you at that time that I heard nothing about your being sorry for allowing Dave Miller to bring division into the congregation by way of a secret meeting with over thirty men of the congregation. You did not admit to the congregation nor apologize for attending this meeting. Again, I told you that as an eldership, you needed to rebuke Dave for calling a meeting to orchestrate the overthrow of three elders. Dave had already resigned and had no further business with the Brown Trail congregation. Yet, you sanctioned this meeting by your attendance. When will you go before the congregation and tell them the truth?

You accuse me of being dishonest for taking my salary while disagreeing with you. You say that I was “biting the hand that was feeding me.” Was Dave Miller dishonest for taking a salary while in open rebellion to directives given him by his elders? I did not speak out publicly against the elders but Dave did in chapel and in class. Was he biting the hand that was feeding him? Dave whined in his letter of resignation that he was mistreated by the elders and then continued to draw a salary through May, June and July. Was he dishonest? It seems to me you have a double standard.

You complain that my article on the website is designed to do harm to Brown Trail. However, the harm has been done by you four elders, Maxie Boren, Dave Miller and Everett Chambers. My reporting the facts of your conduct is no more the problem than Elijah rebuking Ahab for his conduct. Ahab said to Elijah, “Is that you, Oh troubler of Israel?” (1 Kings 18:17). So you spread the word that I am a trouble-maker. But who really caused the trouble at Brown Trail? You, who met in secret to plot an overthrow of three elders are the trouble-makers!

My article only gave the facts of what you did by meeting in secret. The Psalmist has well spoken of your evil plotting:

“Hide me from the secret plots of the wicked...they talk of laying snares secretly...they devise iniquities: ‘we have perfected a shrewd scheme.’ But God shall shoot at them with an arrow. Suddenly they shall be wounded. So he will make them stumble over their own tongue..” (Psalm 64).

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Did Paul hurt or help the church at Corinth or the churches of Galatia (4:16) by relating to them their sins? Harm to the church comes from false brethren, not from those who expose their error! Paul's rebuke of sin was not to harm but to help. On the other hand, Maxie continues to send your propaganda everywhere in an attempt to continue the cover-up of Dave and Everett as well as **your conspiracy** to usurp the eldership at Brown Trail. My article is on the Internet for those who want to know the truth.

You four men with Maxie's help have taken over the leadership at Brown Trail. Many members left because of what you did. (According to Maxie's "Open Letter" of November 20, 2002, relatively few left, so what are you complaining about?) Those who left did not leave because of anything I said or what appeared on the website long after the events took place. I did nothing dishonest. I was open with you regarding my opposition. I did not go among the congregation to promote my views as you did. I met with no one in secret to plot your overthrow. In fact, I did additional work for the PTS for which I was not paid.

You have said that I need to come before the congregation and repent because I opposed you. Again, you continue to have a double standard. Dave Miller, on more than one occasion, spoke against the "evil elders" to the PTS students. Was he undermining the elders? Was he sowing discord? Does he need to come before the Brown Trail congregation to confess what he did and repent? For years, Maxie has taken individuals aside to warn them about Bobby Watts being a dictator among the elders and running the show at Brown Trail. Was he undermining the elders or sowing discord? Does he need to come before the congregation and repent? Brethren, a double standard is nothing more than hypocrisy!

Bobby Watts assured me, before I came to work at Brown Trail, that the reaffirmation of elders would never again be practiced at Brown Trail. Did he lie to me in breaking this pledge? I left a productive and peaceful work to come to Brown Trail based on such affirmations. Another double standard.

Brethren, **YOU** four elders with the help of your preacher, Maxie Boren created the division at Brown Trail. **YOU** have usurped the leadership of the church and **YOU** continue to blame others for the resulting division. **YOU** want to uphold Dave and Everett in their treatment of the students in the PTS. You say that anyone who disagrees with you is sowing discord. You threw brother French out of the eldership falsely accusing him of sowing discord but it is **YOU** who were sowing the discord! **YOU** have sinned and **YOU** are the ones who need to repent before the Brown Trail congregation. My prayer is that you will do so before it is eternally too late.

In Christ,

Dan Flourney

1/10/03 Revised 1/14/03

**On September 23rd Dave Miller issued a statement regarding his role in the controversy surrounding his error/involvement with "R/R" of elders and MDR as it relates to "intent". Sadly brother Miller's statement serves no objective purpose in clearing up this matter but rather serves to muddy the waters further.**

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**Before reading Dave Miller's statement we would recommend you arm yourselves with the scriptures listed below. Keep in mind the issue before us is not about personalities or who likes who but it is about obeying and following the TRUTH that will save our souls in Judgment. We are engaged in a spiritual battle of WORDS – TRUTH versus a LIE. We must keep in mind the warnings found in the scriptures about those who would pervert the Gospel of our Lord.**

Our Lord said "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." (Matt 7:15).

"Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents and harmless as doves." (Matt 10:16).

Paul said, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." (I Thes 5:21).

John said, "BELOVED, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." (I John 4:1).

Paul said concerning the duty of an elder, "Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. For there many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake." (Titus 1:9-11).

Paul said, "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works." 2 Corinthians 11:12-14

"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." Romans 16:17-18

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

"Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. John 8:31-32

"Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest judgment:" Exodus 23:2

### **9/23/05 Dave Miller issues the following statement:**

#### **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

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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 scriptural 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.

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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

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PS: In addition to the above misrepresentations, I have been astounded that in the last 3-4 years, additional FALSE rumors have circulated about me, including the following:

1. That I believe in instrumental music in worship
2. That I stole money from Brown Trail (a charge dispelled by an IRS audit)
3. That I had an affair with a woman
4. That I believe in the doctrine of annihilation of the soul
5. That I am dead

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### **10/04/05 Dub McClish issues the following (Revised) response to the Dave Miller statement:**

#### **A RESPONSE TO BROTHER MILLER'S STATEMENT**

I am glad to see that brother Miller has finally addressed in print the accusations many of us have made against him for a long time. I have read brother Miller's statement, and I have some observations:

1. His condescending attitude is evident in the title of his statement. He suggests that those who dare question his doctrine or practice is "dishonorable" and "insincere," and that those who do not accept all of his explanatory statements are "dishonorable," "insincere," and wilfully ignorant. He obviously does not think well of those who dare question his doctrine or practice.
2. He based Brown Trail's implementation of the reevaluation/reaffirmation (hereafter r/r) procedure in 1990 on the claim that the elders themselves "initiated," "instigated," and "executed" the program. To argue that a practice is authorized merely because fallible elders decide to do it is very dangerous ground. A large number of unauthorized and erroneous practices, which elderships have "initiated," "instigated," and "executed" characterize many congregations nowadays. "Eldership authorization" and "Scripture authorization" may be and sometimes are vastly different. Liberals argue that women may lead prayers or preach in mixed adult assemblies **if the elders themselves "initiate" and "instigate" it.**
3. I do not know about other "critics," but I have not defined brother Miller's r/r doctrine for him in what I have written about him (1997 Bellview Lectures book, *Leadership*). I simply quoted him and let him define what he believes and advocates concerning the practice. I believe he has attempted to erect a straw man here, of which he can easily dispose, of course. He needs to come face-to-face-with what he taught and helped implement, rather than accusing others of inventing things about him.
4. I have never suggested (nor have I seen it suggested by others) that Dave Miller believes in the practice of "term limits" or stated terms for elders, at the end of which they must submit to the r/r procedure. This is another straw man.
5. If he does not believe "that a congregation has the right to use any procedure that expels qualified men from the eldership," why did he advocate and help implement a procedure that could

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do just that? In the "Rationale" (prepared and issued by the Brown Trail r/r committee, of which brother Miller was a part), issued to help "sell" the congregation on the r/r program it implemented in 1990, we read the following: Shepherds cannot lead where sheep will not follow. Even if a man is technically qualified to be an elder, if the membership where he attends does not perceive him as a leader whom they respect and trust, he cannot shepherd effectively. Brother Miller said the same thing in his sermon on April 8, 1990, from the Brown Trail pulpit. The admission that an elder who is qualified may be removed simply because a sufficient number of members choose not to follow him or do not "perceive him as a leader" is a glaring and exceedingly dangerous addition of Sacred Scripture. To "perceive" one as a leader on its very surface is a subjective evaluation. This, in effect, adds another qualification to those Paul specified in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. 6. Brother Miller cites Acts 6:3 as if it favors his r/r case. All this passage does is furnish the principle that the whole congregation is to be involved in the selection of elders and/or deacons. One searches it in vain to find some intricate reevaluation process of men who were already selected, appointed, and serving. Acts 6:3 does not help his cause.

7. To use 1 Timothy 5:17–20 as authority for the r/r practice is to engage in eisegesis rather than exegesis. To say that a man should be removed because "25% of the congregation doesn't want to follow him," "doesn't like him, or "doesn't perceive him as a leader" is not in this passage or any other. 1 Timothy 5:17–20 does not help his case. Obviously, brother Miller would have used additional passages to justify the r/r process if he could have found them.

8. To accuse those who dare question brother Miller's advocacy of r/r as thereby pursuing a "pet hobby" is purely pejorative terminology, intended to bias uninformed readers against those who sincerely question his doctrine and/or practice. The hurling of such terminology has for years been a favorite ploy of liberals, and it is certainly unworthy of the author of the fine book, *Piloting the Strait*.

9. We who deny the existence of Scriptural authority for the r/r process are not the ones who tamper with the authority of elders, as he charges. Rather, those (whether or not they are elders at the time) who form committees (such as brother Miller was a part of) are those who tamper with the authority of elders **by becoming de facto "elderships" while the r/r procedure runs its course**. The existing elderships and their respective congregations in such cases **must subject themselves** to such committees for the plan to operate.

10. If brother Miller was not involved in the 2002 r/r procedure at Brown Trail, why did he help Maxie Boren (Brown Trail preacher at the time) defend the practice to brother Dub Mowery ([nativeheritage@peoplepc.com](mailto:nativeheritage@peoplepc.com)), who journeyed all the way from Drumright, OK (near Tulsa, where he preached at the time) to Brown Trail (about 300 miles) to express his objections to and concerns over their 2002 version of r/r?

11. Brother Miller seeks to place the Brown Trail practice of r/r in the realm of "expediency." This appeal to "expediency," however, overlooks an elementary principle of Biblical hermeneutics: Scriptural authorization must precede expediency. No matter can be expedient unless it is first authorized, and the Scriptural authorization for this practice has not been and cannot be produced.

12. Why is brother Miller "astounded" that an event that occurred 15 years ago could cause such a "stir"? Surely, he is aware that the mere passage of time does not transform sin into righteousness or error into Truth? Repentance, rather than the passing of time, is necessary for correction and forgiveness. My guess is that he has likely preached this principle to others through the years.

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13. Brother Miller denies he has "preached or promoted" this practice since 1990 (clearly, an admission that he "preached" and "promoted" it then). Brother David Watson has observed his influence encouraging this practice in a congregation near him in recent years, contrary to his disclaimer.

14. If brother Everett Chambers and his cousin "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)," how did their actions help him get into and stay in the U.S.? Did they not have to go through some sort of wedding ceremony and did they not have to affix their signatures to an application for a marriage license and then do the same on a marriage certificate? Were not these actions on the part of both of them actions which indicate "that they actually intended to be married," even though their purpose in doing so was a conspiracy to "defraud" the authorities? Was not the full intent of both of them to become legally married so as to enable him to enter and remain in the U.S.? Had they not indicated to the authorities (by going through required marriage procedures) that they desired to be married, they could not have accomplished their purpose. They may not have viewed themselves as married, but the authorities did, else they would not have had to "put through the paperwork to end the 'marriage'" (generally called "divorce"). I have the same difficulty justifying this "I didn't intend to" doctrine that I do in justifying the Roman Catholic doctrine of "mental reservation."

15. Is brother Miller implying in the statement above that a man and a woman are not married at the time they are pronounced husband and wife, but that they must "live together" before they become married? If, after being pronounced "husband and wife" in the eyes of both civil and Divine law, Bob and Sally, on the way from the wedding site to the place of their initial act of intimacy, Bob dies of a heart attack, were they never married?

16. What is the relevance of the woman's being ineligible to marry brother Chambers because they were cousins? Is he arguing that had she not been his cousin, their defrauding the immigration authorities would have been acceptable?

17. That the woman had been married before and was not eligible to remarry does not alter the fact of their conspiratorial intent. Is brother Miller attempting to argue that had she been eligible to marry, the deception would have been justified? If this is not his point, I missed it.

18. That brother Chambers was not a Christian at the time he and his cousin "accidentally" married is hardly relevant, unless one wishes to argue (as many false teachers do) that one's marriage relationships before he becomes a Christian do not "count," and that baptism takes care of such unscriptural unions.

19. Whether or not brother Chambers "remains unmarried to this day" is not the issue. The issue is, does brother Miller believe/teach that brother Chambers has a Scriptural right to remarry?

20. So far as I know, neither brother Chambers nor his cousin whom he married was kidnapped or drugged and therefore pronounced "husband and wife" against their wills or while in a drugged stupor. They were quite conscious of what they were doing, fully intending deceptively (yet nonetheless actually) to marry each other. Nor were they actors in a movie, but they deceptively "acted out" a live drama, with full intent to satisfy civil marriage laws so as to deceive the U.S. Government.

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21. I have never suggested or heard anyone suggest that brother Miller has so "abandoned Bible teaching on MDR" that he is "out counseling hundreds of people to remarry." If anyone is doing so, he should stop. Also, if anyone is doing so, let brother Miller produce the evidence of such or stop his accusation.

22. It is good to see brother Miller's forthright declaration of his position on who is eligible to marry, divorce, and remarry. However, he then diminishes the impact of that position statement with a significant "However, several years ago the following..." exception, describing the behavior of Everett Chambers. After describing it, he then concludes: "Yet, this extremely rare, unusual, unique situation is being held up as a 'false doctrine that threatens to undermine the very foundations of marriage!'" It matters not how "extremely rare, unusual, unique" the situation with brother Chambers may have been and may still be. If one (including brother Miller) justifies and excuses this practice in one person, then he must logically and consistently do so for all persons. If (a) brother Chambers did what brother Miller says he did (legally married his cousin), and (b) if he did it for the reason brother Miller says he did it (to defraud the U.S. Government, lying in order to circumvent U.S. immigration law), and (c) if, as brother Miller believes, brother Chambers and his cousin were not really married because of their lack of "intent," then (d) "the very foundations of marriage" are indeed thereby threatened.

23. Brother Miller refers to those who have dared challenge his strange MDR position relative to brother Chambers as "talebearers of the brotherhood." Would liberals, whose errors he exposed so well in *Piloting the Strait*, be accurate in characterizing him as a "talebearer of the brotherhood"? I doubt that he would think so. Neither do I believe that he is accurate or fair in thus characterizing those who are not content to let his errors pass.

24. Brother Miller's statement will doubtless be more than sufficient for those who have defended him through the years. They will now begin saying that he has "cleared up" and "corrected" all of those accusations. However, for my part, I see no substantive answers to any of the nagging doctrinal questions he has created. I find his statement to be a very weak and self-serving one. Some may even suggest that I will not be satisfied unless "he crawls over shattered glass" and "bathes my feet in tears," but they will be as wrong as wrong can be. While I require no such thing, I do wish he had forthrightly repented of (instead of denying) his errors.

—Dub McClish  
October 4, 2005

### **10/06/05 Dave Watson issued the following review of Dave Miller's "statement":**

#### **A RESPONSE TO DAVE MILLER'S "REPLY"**

On September 23, 2005 brother Dave Miller wrote a "Reply" that he titled: "For Honorable Brethren Who Sincerely Want to Know." Brother Dub McClish has correctly observed: "His condescending attitude is evident in the title of his statement. He suggests that anyone who dares question his doctrine or practice is 'dishonorable' and 'insincere,' and that those who do not buy all of his explanatory statements are 'dishonorable,' 'insincere,' and willfully ignorant."

Brother Miller begins by placing those who oppose and expose his errors into a minority "in our great brotherhood." He implicitly (and falsely) charges that they "choose to believe the" worst "about their brother," that they render a "judgment" before "verification is forthcoming" and that they do not "want to

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believe and hope the best about their brothers and sisters in Christ.” This same tactic was used by brother Frank Chesser when he falsely charged that brother Dub McClish possessed a “judgmental, censorious, self-righteous, unforgiving spirit that characterizes a small and diminishing group of brethren in the church.” It was used again by brother Joseph Meador when he falsely charged that brother McClish is 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.” It was further used by brother Curtis Cates who falsely campaigned that: “brother McClish’s reputation had been ruined and that if he remained as editor [of *TGJ*] the paper would die.” It was finally used by brother Barry Grider who charged brother McClish with “viciousness” and “falsehood” and claimed that he “did not deserve nor need to be in the position he was in.” Brethren Miller, Chesser, Meador, Cates and Grider are all attempting to “poison the well” concerning those who point out their errors so that the uninformed will think that such allegations are unverified and that the accusations are only “rumors and hearsay.”

#### **“Elder Reaffirmation”**

Brother Miller denies that he believes in the reaffirmation and reevaluation of elders. His testimony is: “I do not believe in the ‘reaffirmation/reevaluation of elders’ as my critics have defined the concept.” But, let us call another witness. Brother Eddie Whitten was a member of the Brown Trail congregation serving, for many years, as director of the school of preaching and also as an elder until he “left there under very distasteful and distressing circumstances in 1989.” He writes:

We, the elders at Brown Trail, unfortunately allowed two men to be appointed as elders, who gave the “right answers” to questions asked in interviews with them, who revealed their liberal leanings as soon as they were appointed to the eldership. The next 3 ½ to 4 years became an ongoing contest to retain the Biblical integrity of the Brown Trail church. The eldership was divided to the point that we were stalemated and could not effectively function for the good of the church. After that much time had elapsed under those trying conditions, one of the “good” elders had to resign for health reasons. That left the “liberals” in control. With the apparent intent of remedying the situation, Dave precipitated a confrontation between the two factions. The obvious result was that the liberals forced me to resign (actually minutes before being fired) and Ed Clark followed suit in the next couple of days. The men of the congregation demanded a meeting to explain what was going on. It was in that meeting that my respect for Dave Miller vanished.

In the months preceding my resignation, Dave had expressed his concern to me about the views of the most vocal of the liberal elders. He mentioned to a young couple in the congregation just two weeks prior to the above event how dangerous this man was. There were about a hundred, or more, in the meeting the men requested of the elders. In the course of the meeting someone asked me to give my side of the story. I related that there was liberalism in the eldership and in the faculty of the school of preaching. They asked me what I meant by the term “liberalism.” I answered that things were being advocated such as (1) authorizing women deacons, (2) all of life is worship, (3) no authority for elders except by example, and (4) praying to Jesus.

After I had returned to my seat, Dave spoke up and stated, “I don’t see anything liberal about these men!” I could hardly believe my ears! He destroyed my case and my respect for him. The result was that now there were only the liberal elders left.

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Within the next six months, there was, at his suggestion, a “reevaluation of the eldership.” In a tape that I heard myself, Dave stated that 1 Timothy 5:19 was authority for reevaluating an eldership. I know where the tape is, and I think it could be made available if desired. In my judgment, 1 Timothy 5:19 is addressing the case of an elder who is guilty of sin and who will not repent. It has nothing to do with reevaluating or reconfirming an eldership. Ballots were passed out to the congregation for their vote. The existing elders were not to see the results, only the five preachers that were at Brown Trail and the School of Preaching. The result was that three of the four remaining elders were ousted by the congregation. Two other men were appointed at that time. Dave had accomplished his mission! He had remedied the stalemate by grossly unscriptural means.

We now call upon brother Dave Miller to give testimony against himself. He has already done so in a sermon preached at Brown Trail on Sunday morning April 8, 1990. In that sermon he explained to the congregation the process of reevaluating and reconfirming present elders. Notice these nine statements from that sermon:

1. “A system has been set in place by which current elders might be evaluated and additional elders might be added to the body of elders.”
2. “We[II], that certainly seems to cover the question of how elders ought to be selected, but what about this idea of reevaluating current elders or reconfirming—and there are some brethren that are really up in arms it seems to me and say that is what the liberals are doing. Well, they may be, but I am unconcerned about that in terms of whether it is right or wrong—but I am concerned about what the Bible teaches.”
3. “We may use the term *evaluation of elders*, we may use the term *reconfirmation*, if those terms concern you, then call it something else, but the principle is that if the membership finds fault with an elder, the membership who put the elder(s) in [at] the first, can remove them.
4. “I would still maintain that a man could theoretically be qualified and yet have lost his standing with enough of the members that he ought to voluntarily remove himself. Now how do you determine that unless you ask the members how they perceive that man as an elder of the church?”
5. “No one should be threatened by the prospect of being evaluated, not a one of us, the preacher shouldn’t be, the School of Preaching instructors, the elders, the deacons and all of us as members, ought to have in our mind set, in our attitude, an evaluation mentality, because my friends the Lord is going to evaluate us one day—and it may be sooner than we think.”
6. “And if I, or anyone else in a leadership sort of capacity, no longer sustains the respect from a sizable portion of the flock, for whatever reason, the proper attitude would be to remove oneself from that position.”
7. “There will be two types of forms. One of these forms will give you an opportunity to simply state whether or not you think any of the five men who are now serving in the eldership should or should not continue to serve. You won’t be asked to sign that form, in fact our five current elders have made that point, that this is strictly your opportunity without any pressure from anywhere or anyone to state your feelings about the current eldership in light of what the Bible teaches.”
8. “Present elders would need to receive sizable support from this congregation.”
9. “Then, theoretically, once those can be sorted out, on May 27th, the last Sunday of the month of May, we will be able to formally appoint, ordain those men who will serve as elders of this congregation. Now that may or may not include the five present ones. That’s up to you.”

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The above statements, from brother Miller, clearly show that he has defined the concept of elder reaffirmation/reevaluation himself. These statements show that when brother Miller says, “I do not believe in the ‘reaffirmation/reevaluation of elders’ as my critics have defined the concept,” he is lying. They also show that when he says, “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,” he is stating a falsehood. They further show that when he says, “I do not believe that a congregation has the right to use any procedure that expels qualified men from the eldership,” he is stating another lie. Finally, these statements show that when he says, “the specific instance at Brown Trail in 1990 entailed a process that was instigated and executed by the elders themselves,” and that “it was the elders themselves that initiated the process and implemented it from beginning to end,” he is not being accurate.

### **Elder Reaffirmation at Brown Trail**

Brother Miller recognizes the distinction between additional elders being added and current elders being reevaluated, reaffirmed or reconfirmed when he says in statement 1: “A system has been set in place by which current elders might be evaluated and additional elders might be added to the body of elders.” After covering “the question of how elders ought to be selected” he then moves, in statement 2, to “this idea of reevaluating current elders or reconfirming” them. In statement 3 he sets forth the criteria by which current elders are to be reevaluated, reaffirmed or reconfirmed. He says: “the principle is that if the membership finds fault with an elder, the membership who put the elder(s) in [at] the first, can remove them.” In statement 4 he defines what he means by the word “fault” saying: “I would still maintain that a man could theoretically be qualified and yet have lost his standing with enough of the members that he ought to voluntarily remove himself.” He maintains that a man who has been made an elder by the Holy Spirit (Acts 20:28) and is currently serving as an elder, qualified according to the Scriptures (1 Tim. 3:1 – 7; Titus 1:5 – 9; 1 Pet. 5:1 – 4), but has “lost his standing with enough of the members” should “voluntarily remove himself” from office. He further maintains that if he will not “voluntarily remove himself” from office “the membership who put the elder in [at] the first, can remove [him].” And “how do you determine” if a currently serving, Scripturally qualified elder has “lost his standing with enough of the members” so that he should “voluntarily remove himself” from office or be removed by the members? Brother Miller answers: “you ask the members how they perceive that man as an elder of the church.”

The apostle Peter said: “But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies...” (2 Pet. 2:1). Brother Dave Miller is a false teacher who is trying to privily bring in a damnable heresy. Brother Guy N. Woods wrote: “Privily (*pareisago*) means to slip in by the side of, and indicates that these teachers had artfully and slyly introduced their false doctrines by the side of truth in such a fashion as to deceive those who had accepted them.” Brother Miller is artfully and slyly trying to introduce a new qualification for currently serving, Scripturally qualified elders. This new and unscriptural qualification has to do with how an elder is “perceived.” Notice these quotes from brother Miller:

So what I am suggesting to you brethren, based upon these passages, is members of the church, of the local congregation, are to look ye out—that they are to consult among themselves and reach an agreement concerning who is qualified to be an elder, and whom they **perceive** to be a leader, and then those men are to be formally appointed or installed into that function.

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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 [is] 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.

Now how do you determine that unless you ask the members how they **perceive** that man as an elder of the church?

Brother Miller falsely claims that in addition to the Scriptural qualifications, which a man must meet in order to become an elder and must maintain in order to remain an elder, there is something else to consider. He falsely claims that the man must be one that the members “perceive to be a leader.” He says that the man must be “perceived by that flock as a shepherd.” He again adds that the membership must “perceive him a leader.” He specifically states: “that one of the qualifications of a shepherd is that the membership perceive him to be such.” Then he falsely concludes that “you ask the members how they perceive that man as an elder of the church.” The one he designates as “that man” is a currently serving, Scripturally qualified shepherd of the church.

But let us try brother Miller’s new, unscriptural qualification on the “chief Shepherd” (1 Pet. 5:4). Even though Jesus Christ is qualified, in the eyes of God, to be our “chief Shepherd” would brother Miller claim that He must also be “perceived” by His sheep to be a leader and that He must be “perceived” by His flock as a shepherd? Brother Miller stated: “Shepherds cannot lead where sheep will not follow.” Does the fact that some sheep will not submit to and follow the lead of the “chief Shepherd” indicate that He “cannot shepherd effectively”? The fact that some sheep will not respect and trust the “Shepherd and Bishop” of their souls (1 Pet. 2:25) does not disqualify Him nor does it disqualify a currently serving, Scripturally qualified shepherd or bishop. If members do not perceive a Scripturally qualified elder as a leader they are at fault, not the elder. If members will not submit to a Scripturally qualified elder then they are sinning. “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). If members will not follow a Scripturally qualified elder then the members are in violation of Scripture. “Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of [their] conversation” (Heb. 13:7). If the members do not properly perceive a Scripturally qualified elder as worthy of respect and trust then they lose their standing before God for Paul commanded: “And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake. [And] be at peace among yourselves” (1 The. 5:12 – 13).

Brother Miller’s false doctrine has disrupted the peace of congregations across our great brotherhood beginning at Brown Trail but not ending there. His statement 5 said: “No one should be threatened by the prospect of being evaluated, not a one of us.” He then went on to name “the preacher...School of Preaching instructors, the elders, the deacons and all of us members.” He overlooks the fact that elders have the rule over preachers, instructors, deacons and all members (Heb. 13:17) and that this reaffirmation/reevaluation process takes that rule away from currently serving, Scripturally qualified elders. He correctly points out that “the Lord is going to evaluate us one day.” Does brother Miller believe that Scripturally qualified elders will

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be judged unfit for heaven because in addition to the qualifications found in the Word of God (which will judge all of us [John 12:48]), they were not properly “perceived” (as defined by brother Miller) by the members?

In statement 6 brother Miller makes this astounding claim: “And if I, or anyone else in a leadership sort of capacity, no longer sustains the respect from a sizable portion of the flock, for whatever reason, the proper attitude would be to remove oneself from that position.” He claims that not only must currently serving, Scripturally qualified elders “sustain the respect from...the flock” but such “respect” must be “from a sizable portion of the flock.” He later defines the sizable portion to be 75% of those who voted. He further claims that if such “respect” is not sustained “for whatever reason” the “proper attitude would be to remove oneself from that position” as an elder. *For whatever reason* would allow “unruly and vain talkers and deceivers...whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre’s sake” to replace an elder who is “Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers” (Tit. 1:9 – 11). Of course, if the elder did not voluntarily remove himself from office the members, according to brother Miller, could do so. His heresy is indeed damnable.

In statement 7 brother Miller again indicated a distinction between selecting new elders and reaffirming, reevaluating or reconfirming currently serving, Scripturally qualified elders. He said, “There will be two types of forms. One of these forms will give you an opportunity to simply state whether or not you think any of the five men who are now serving in the eldership should or should not continue to serve.” Notice that this determination is to be made on the basis of what the members “think” in spite of the fact that these elders may be Scripturally qualified. Then, in opposition to the fact that the Bible says: “Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses” (1 Tim. 5:19) brother Miller says: “You won’t be asked to sign that form [this point was later changed], in fact, our five current elders have made that point, that this is strictly your opportunity without any pressure from anywhere or anyone to state your feelings about the current eldership in light of what the Bible teaches.” Notice again that this determination is to be made on the basis of the “feelings” of the members. And how would anyone know if those feelings were “in light of what the Bible teaches”?

In statement 8 brother Miller again refers to his arbitrary “sizable support” yardstick: “Present elders would need to receive sizable support from this congregation.” Remember again that this “sizable support” figure was set at 75% of **those who voted**, not 75% of the membership, which could make a big difference in the outcome.

In statement 9 brother Miller announces that “once those [forms] can be sorted out” (i.e., votes counted) “we will be able to formally appoint, ordain those men who will serve as elders of this congregation. Now that may or may not include the five present ones.” How were the presently serving elders to be appointed or ordained if they were not viewed as having resigned their positions? This procedure therefore necessarily includes elder resignation in addition to elder reevaluation/reaffirmation. Even if they had resigned (which is nowhere indicated in the explanation of the process), and they were to be reappointed or reordained, such would still constitute elder reevaluation/reaffirmation or reconfirmation, which is what brother Miller stated he did not preach or practice. His own sermon shows he is lying.

### **Conclusion**

Brother Miller concluded his recent statement of explanation regarding elder reevaluation/reaffirmation with the following questions: The issue boils down to a single point, illustrated by two questions:

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(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 scriptural right to decide whether he will remove himself on the basis of the response that he gets from the members?

I agree that a currently serving elder has “permission from God” to request feedback regarding whether the members think he is Scripturally qualified to continue to serve and or perform his job properly. Also, the members have “permission from God” to give him feedback regarding whether or not they think he is Scripturally qualified to continue to serve and/or perform his job properly. If they conclude that he is Scripturally qualified to continue to serve and/or perform his job properly, then he can do so. If they conclude that he is not Scripturally qualified to continue to serve and/or perform his job properly, then they must follow 1 Timothy 5:19. Accusations are to be received before two or three witnesses, as opposed to being secret or anonymous. The accused elder also has “permission from God” to respond to the accusations and defend himself. If the accusations are not **Scriptural**, then the elder can continue to serve and/or perform his job properly. If the accusations are **Scriptural**, then the elder, if he refuses to repent, should remove himself from the office of elder. If he will not repent and remove himself from the office of elder, then the congregation should remove him.

Brother Miller's own statements show that he believes in the reaffirmation/reevaluation of elders, per the accusations against him. He is the one who has defined the concept, but the process or method that brother Miller has spelled out for the resignation and/or reevaluation, reaffirmation and/or reconfirmation of currently serving, Scripturally qualified elders is **NOT** found in the Scriptures. It is therefore **NOT** merely “a matter of expediency that falls within the God-granted authority of the elders.” He believes that elders should be temporarily appointed and their terms only continued on the basis of an arbitrary vote of the membership “since the complexion of a congregation in terms of its membership can change over a period of time” and because “an eldership may conceivably no longer consist of the same individuals that the membership would look out from among themselves and appoint.”

He believes that a congregation has the right to use a procedure that expels qualified men from the eldership when only 26% of the members **who vote** find fault with them “for whatever reason.” Brother Whitten’s statements and brother Miller’s own sermon show that the specific instance at Brown Trail in 1990 entailed a process that brother Miller instigated and executed and that it was **NOT** “the elders themselves that initiated the process and implemented it from beginning to end.” Fifteen years later we see from his reply that it is brother Miller who has turned this issue into **his** pet hobby. **He** is the one who is tampering with the authority of elders, and more importantly and dangerously, with the authority of the Word of God.

David B. Watson  
October 6, 2005

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### **Paul & Barnabas At Brown Trail?**

Ashley Smith – September 16, 2002

It never ceases to amaze me how some brethren want to cover up sin in the church so as not to “hurt the cause of Christ.” The Holy Spirit made no such attempts to whitewash the image of the church by concealing the sins of her members. If He did, He would not have told the whole world about Ananias, Sapphira, Simon the Sorcerer, Hymenaeus, Philetus, Alexander the Coppersmith, or Diotrephes (Acts 5:1-11; 8:9-24; 1 Tim. 1:20; 2 Tim. 2:17; 4:14; 3 John 9-10). Instead of silencing those who have knowledge of sin, Christians are to deal with it (Matt. 18:15-17; Gal. 6:1; 1 Tim. 5:19-20; Gal. 2:11-14; 1 Cor. 5; 2 Thess. 3:6-15; Titus 3:10-11; Rom. 16:17). Usually, sin can be dealt with privately, but sometimes it has to be addressed publicly (Matt. 18:17; 1 Tim. 5:20; Gal. 2:14; 1 Cor. 5; 2 Thess. 3:6-15; Titus 3:10-11; Rom. 16:17). In such instances we should remember that God is honored when His people recognize the ugliness of sin and encourage the sinners to repent or withdraw from them. It is a sad day when a congregation comes to believe she has “arrived” and therefore should be exempt from criticism. Such an attitude is reminiscent of the two worst churches in the book of Revelation—Sardis (who had a reputation of being alive) and Laodicea (who thought she had need of nothing).

The problems at Brown Trail have been likened to the disagreement between Paul and Barnabas over John Mark (Acts 15:36-39) with the “evil talebearing” among observers being the only real sin. Let us start with this Bible account and modify it to make it more closely resemble the Brown Trail situation. Suppose John Mark had some serious past issues that had not been resolved. Suppose also that John Mark showed an aggressive, domineering attitude towards people. Suppose then that Paul found John Mark unsuitable for the present work because of that dubious past and his present autocratic behavior. Suppose that Paul as well as many other brethren brought their concerns to Barnabas and to the elders at Antioch. Suppose then Barnabas became infuriated and lashed out against Paul and the other brethren, telling them they were full of pride, servants of Satan, and going to hell because they talked to the elders. Suppose Barnabas continued to demonize all those who confronted him or John Mark, calling them rebellious, evil, arrogant, unbrotherly, belligerent, backstabbers, wicked, despicable, warped, frustrated, unkind, unloving, spiritual cowards, slanderers, gossips, and murderers. Suppose the elders tried to reform Barnabas and John Mark to harness their talent for constructive rather than destructive use. Suppose then that Barnabas and John Mark responded by sowing discord against these elders and replacing them with new ones more to their liking. Suppose that when Antioch church members saw what was going on, many of them left. Suppose then that Barnabas also left to let things settle down and another preacher took over his work. Suppose then that preacher and the elders told other churches that everything was fine at Antioch—that Barnabas acted with impeccable integrity and that the problem was just a difference in opinion. Suppose they then focused on stopping people from talking about it, calling it talebearing, gossip, slander, and merciless criticism. As you can tell, we have now departed far from Paul and Barnabas in Acts 15—so far that there is little parallel between the situations.

The 120 or so brethren who left Brown Trail should not be characterized as malicious gossips trying to destroy the congregation. We left because we feel strongly that Brown Trail has “sin in the camp.” Reasons vary from individual to individual, but most would cite some if not all of the following: slander, financial mismanagement, Boston Movement influence, lying, unscriptural removal of elders, dividing the Lord’s Body, compromised doctrine, and the covering up of sin. As these matters are serious and necessitate the marking of some brethren (Rom. 16:17), we are trying to get the message out through various means (i.e. [www.brown-trail-truth.com](http://www.brown-trail-truth.com)). Brethren need to be aware of what happened and make what decisions they deem appropriate. This is a brotherhood issue as brethren all over support the men involved and solicit their services at their local congregations. If Brown Trail wants to rebuild her former reputation, she needs to resolve her recent issues instead of trying to silence her critics. Brown Trail, if we are wrong, produce the

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evidence to refute our message, but don't attack our motives!

### **Some Questions:**

1. Why does Brown Trail want brethren to send money and students without giving them an account of what happened?
2. Can a disagreement escalate into sin?
3. Is a church problem completely resolved when Christians are still leaving a congregation?
4. If the problem was handled correctly, why does Brown Trail refuse to talk about it?

Ashley Williams - September 16, 2002

## **Secret Meeting Arranged by David Miller**

June 23, 2002, was a defining time in the history of Brown Trail Church of Christ as well as the programs that it oversees. If you have done any reading of the documents that have been in distribution and are posted on the website: [brown-trail-truth.com](http://brown-trail-truth.com), you are aware of some of the events leading up to that date. We believe that several of these have altered the course of the future of Brown Trail Church of Christ and its programs.

One of these defining events was a secret meeting arranged by David Miller at the home of Gerald and Rosa Lee Nations. This meeting occurred after David Miller had already resigned from Brown Trail. Attending the meeting were about 35 men selected by David Miller and others. Four of the seven elders (Watts, Pope, Parker, Elliott) also attended without the other three elders (Barker, French, McKenzie) being informed of, or invited to, the meeting. At this meeting, David Miller gave his "version" of the problems, and according to Bobby Watts there was a discussion of how to deal with the other three elders. The four elders (Watts, Pope, Parker, Elliott) never revealed the secret meeting until July 2002 after two elders (Barker, McKenzie) had already resigned.

This event was confirmed again in a meeting in mid-December, 2002, between Eddy Parker (one of the four elders) and Brother Tom Grayson. Brother Robert Dodson was a neutral third party at the meeting. Eddy Parker admitted to Brothers Grayson and Dodson that there was a secret meeting arranged by David Miller, that the purpose of the meeting was planning the ousting of the three elders (Barker, French, McKenzie), that the meeting took place after David Miller resigned and had no further business with Brown Trail, that the four elders were there and did nothing to admonish David or the selected men attending.

The four elders who attended the secret meeting have said there was no problem because nothing was decided (voted on). That is not correct. Plans were laid from that meeting to remove three elders (Barker, French, McKenzie). Between the secret meeting and June 23, Maxie Boren brought forth his Elder Reaffirmation plan. The plan was accepted immediately by Watts, Pope, Parker, and Elliott. They signed it without discussion. There were at least three different drafts of the letter: the first signed by those four elders on which Brother Barker hand wrote a message of opposition, the second was the one on which Brother McKenzie's wife printed his name and statement of concern because he was out of town, and the third one that was mailed with additional information of a biased nature added by Maxie Boren. The third form was not seen by Barker, French, and McKenzie before it was mailed. Copies of all three versions exist.

This divisive instrument and its orchestration were proposed on Tuesday by Maxie Boren and on Friday was mailed to selected members of the congregation (several were omitted). Having experienced what this same reaffirmation process had done to the congregation in May of 1990 and unable to generate any discussion in the total eldership, Brother McKenzie felt the whole matter needed to go before the congregation so that they would

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have as much information as possible. With the concurrence of Brother Barker and Brother French, he committed to sharing their concerns with the membership after Sunday morning worship had been ended. Brother McKenzie was to give the closing prayer and then planned to make his comments. Just before worship was to start, he was informed that there were to be two speakers after worship service had ended. Dean Mannen (deacon) had been instructed by Bobby Watts to prepare and read a statement to the congregation. (The statement was designed to clear David Miller of any financial wrongdoing and the statement is available for viewing.) Phil Pope was also to address the congregation for the purpose of praising the reaffirmation procedure and apparently endorse it from the standpoint of the four elders. The content of these presentations were part of the orchestrated plan involving four elders and others to remove three elders (McKenzie, Barker, French) that had grown out of the secret meeting a few days before. Brother McKenzie told Dean Mannen that he had the closing prayer, and then he was going to make a few remarks. Dean could read his statement after Brother McKenzie finished, followed by the statement to be read by Phil Pope.

After Brother McKenzie delivered his comments in opposition to the reaffirmation plan and after Dean had read his statement, Phil Pope apparently chose not to read his statement to the congregation. That afternoon, four elders (Watts, Elliott, Parker, Pope) met without the knowledge of the remaining three elders and instructed Maxie Boren to deliver his message of condemnation against Brother McKenzie. Before Sunday evening worship, Maxie Boren spoke with at least two people telling them what the four elders had instructed him to do. Brother Flournoy advised him that he should not do so but that the four elders should deliver their own comments. He asked Rosa Lee Nations (a church secretary who, along with her husband Gerald, had hosted the secret meeting for David Miller) who told him he should do so.

Maxie Boren then made a pivotal decision in the history of Brown Trail and possibly his own reputation. If you were in attendance at evening worship on June 23, you might remember that he gave about a 10 minute devotional, gave the invitation, returned to the pulpit, and then spent approximately 20 minutes condemning an elder from the pulpit. A point of interest was that even though these instructions were given by the four elders, the total eldership (all seven) had their regular meeting and conducted business as usual just before evening worship without any one of the four elders disclosing their actions. Maxie Boren kept quiet as well and disrespected the office of elder in his actions.

The secret meeting indeed bore much fruit of a sinful nature. Because of the actions of these brethren (Miller, Boren, Watts, Parker, Pope, Elliott), more than 150 members (including three elders and three deacons) have left Brown Trail moving to at least eight congregations, the School of Preaching has lost its viability and may be in danger of disappearing, brotherhood publications are beginning to point out the problems at Brown Trail, Maxie Boren is desperately trying to cover up the problems by writing long letters of denial, and questions regarding the support of the school and the television program are being asked by those who supported the two programs. Having no plans to overload you with a nine-page booklet, this information regarding the actions following the secret meeting has been brief.

Jimmy McKenzie

James L. French

Daryl Barker

## **The Departing Dave?**

The purpose of this letter is to expose the lies of Dave Miller given in his resignation presented to the men. I define a lie as a statement that is meant to lead others to believe something that is not true. Please note that there are so many more charges laid at Mr. Miller's feet. The actual resignation entitled *Why Dave Miller Left*

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*Brown Trail* is not included for the sake of brevity.

Before I go into the “factual” lies in Mr. Miller's resignation let me address the second paragraph. What Mr. Miller feels can only be known by Mr. Miller and God, therefore I cannot call this a lie, but I can point out the inconsistency of this statement and his actions. He claims that he deeply loves *Brown Trail* and that he does not want his departure to create any division or disruption to “this great congregation.” If this was true, he should publicly stand up and tell all those that are upset at his leaving to stop their divisive activities. It is the backers of Mr. Miller who are causing the division. He should say that his relationship with this congregation is over and there is nothing to fight for. He should say that this is not justification for division and that they are wrong. Instead, Mr. Miller has said that he wished he didn't have to leave. It should be noted that the elders have done their best to try to work with Mr. Miller, although they have had to remove his authority due to the accusations of abuse.

Mr. Miller lists nine things which are not the reasons he is leaving. Of these nine reasons, two of these do not have anything to do with the stated reasons for leaving.

The first not-the-reason for leaving states that Kevin Yeck was only able to get one other student to openly side with him. There were several students that sided with Kevin. That was why he was such a problem for Mr. Miller and Everett Chambers.

The second not-the-reason given for leaving stated that the elders mistreated Everett Chambers by their handling of his removal. This “removal” would have to be from the position of “Dean of Students.” The reason for their removing Mr. Chambers from this position was because Mr. Chambers was a full time law student. The elders found out about this two weeks before the start of the term. He was to be there for the students in the morning at chapel and at lunch time and, if needed, in the evenings. He would step into chapel at the end and leave immediately afterwards. The elders offered Mr. Chambers a full time teaching position. Mr. Chambers appeared in an elders meeting, turned in his resignation and walked out.

Mr. Miller's resignation states that the “elders” engaged in character assassination by being unduly influenced by Mr. Chambers' previous connection to the Boston Movement. Bobby Watts has informed me that only one of the elders believed this. Then Mr. Miller goes on to charge the elders with not going to the one they consider a false teacher. They have tried, but Mr. Chambers has refused. The elders have even tried to go through the elders at Birdville. The elders have not been guilty of completely shirking their divine obligation to shepherd Mr. Chambers' soul.

The third not-the-reason given for leaving was a matter of a raise that he was to get that turned out to be a decrease in pay. He states in this reason that he was told he would be receiving a 10% increase, but at tax time he discovered that he received \$8,000 less than the year before. The truth is, he was told exactly what he was to receive. He was told to stop paying himself and Mr. Chambers for teaching in addition to the positions they held. Mr. Miller apparently felt it was appropriate to be the director and then to pay himself for the classes he taught. Reasoning he extended to Everett Chambers, the Dean of Students, but not to the Dean of Admissions. Mr. Miller knew he was not going to be getting as much because he was told to stop paying himself the extra money. (Mr. Miller states that he should have been paid for two full time salaries for ten years since there are now two people doing what he used to do.)

In the fifth reason, Mr. Miller includes the statement “the structure of the school has been effectively dismantled by the elders.” When Mr. Miller came to the school, the day-to-day operations were handled by Gary Fallis and Don Simpson. This arrangement remained until Mr. Chambers came to school. At that time he was given many of the responsibilities of administrating the school (while still a student) and then took over the administration of

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the school when he graduated. Mr. Miller has not “run” the day-to-day operations of the school until Mr. Chambers resigned. Mr. Miller had his authority over the school lessened. This does not amount to “the structure of the school” being dismantled by the elders.

Mr. Miller further states that he has begged for the elders to tell him how they wanted him to direct the school. He says he is still waiting for them to tell him. A letter dated 11/13/01 did just that.

The not-the-reason Mr. Miller is leaving number seven and eight states that Mr. Miller flatly denies he has trouble submitting to the authority of the elders. This very letter shows that he does. He put Mr. Chambers in a teaching position when the elders told him not to. He told the students that they are not to go to the elders until they have talked to him when the elders had told the students that they can always come to them. He has told the students that three of the elders will have to answer to God for their actions. The elders have had a rule for all of the full-time staff of the school that they are allowed to preach in meetings or lectureships as long as they did not miss their classes. Mr. Miller would have missed a class on April 22, 2002 if the campaign had not been rescheduled. He did miss his classes on the week that the campaign was originally scheduled. While Mr. Miller was off preaching, only one of the three groups of students had a teacher with them.

The not-the-reason Mr. Miller is leaving number nine states that Mr. Miller has thoroughly documented Mr. Fallis's misconduct and negligence in his duties for anyone who is honest, unbiased and committed to the truth. The truth is that Gary has answered all of the accusations. One of these accusations is that Gary has never had the authority to arrange a campaign. The truth is Gary had been arranging the campaigns since before Mr. Miller came to the school. Mr. Miller has never arranged one.

There are other points that I would like to address that cannot correctly be called lies.

After the nine reasons, Mr. Miller has a paragraph in which he states “I have been operating along the same lines for nearly 15 years.” There are several people who have noticed a change in Mr. Miller. This change started with Mr. Chambers entering school and the writing of *Piloting The Strait*. Before these two events the staff functioned in harmony. That is not to say there were not disagreements, but they were handled without instructors leaving over them.

In this same paragraph Mr. Miller implies that the problems started in September 2001, but that ignores the letter by Mr. Miller of the same nature as this one in 1997.

Mr. Miller states in reason number six that He has brought the school to the high level of quality and competency which he claims, but there are churches in the brotherhood that will not even talk to our graduates because of their attitude. The school at this time is in shambles and the attitude of the students (the responsibility of the director) is appalling. The content of some courses is very substandard. This last quarter, Mr. Miller completed his material on May 8th, after six weeks of instruction (one week was spent on a campaign). The rest of the time was given to other instructors and the viewing of videos unrelated to the class topic.

Mr. Miller and Mr. Chambers have been charged with being influenced by the Boston Movement, of which Mr. Chambers was a part. The accusations are not that they are a part of that movement, but that they are using those techniques. There are several reasons for us to believe this, including Mr. Miller's fruits. The students (the ones who are his favorites) display the characteristics and this has been noticed by many churches in the brotherhood (although they may not know what it is called). The tactics that Mr. Miller and Mr. Chambers have been accused of, do fit the “Boston Movement.” This is serious and needs investigation. There are many congregations in this area that are being influenced by supporters of Mr. Miller.

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Mr. Miller threatens to release his resignation if he does not like what is said about him. He even asked if the elders were sure that they wanted him to read his resignation to the men of the congregation, as if it would only be bad for the elders. Mr. Miller, your resignation shows your concern for yourself over the brotherhood and your willingness to lie and mislead others. I pray that the truth is known concerning all that you have been doing. Truth is not on your side.

Randy Cook

## **To the Brown Trail Congregation:**

In my brief resignation letter read this past Sunday night, I said I would be sending you a more detailed explanation as to why I knew it was time for me to resign as an elder for your congregation. The following are my reasons:

Over the past several weeks, decisions were made, commitments were entered into, and actions were taken that did not involve the participation or knowledge of the full eldership. No attempt to stop this within the eldership was successful. A preacher and some deacons were too involved in directing what some of these activities were. The most critical and the one holding the most potential damage to the congregation is the process of reevaluation that has been hastily entered into.

Problem one: There is wide spread concern that this process is not scriptural. In effect, what you are doing is voting by secret ballot, and the elder must receive approval on 75% of the ballots turned in or resign. If this process is scriptural for reevaluation of elders, why isn't it scriptural for the appointment of elders? If a 75% popularity ranking is scriptural for reevaluation, why isn't it required for appointment? Is there really any true scriptural basis for doing this? There are many more questions that can be asked, please study and ask those questions.

Problem two: Generally the only reevaluation of existing elders is occurring in churches identified as liberal congregations—Richland Hills for example--(Reevaluation/Reaffirmation of Elders, *McClish*) After the first reevaluation in the 1990 time period, Brown Trail (usually noted as a conservative congregation) was heavily criticized by conservative brethren for using a most questionable liberal process. Members at Brown Trail must be ever vigilant of this liberal infiltration.

Problem three: If this questionable, liberal process is undertaken, the material received by the congregation must be fair, must not be biased in any way, and should have complete agreement and backing of the full eldership. None of these three requirements was met. A following paragraph will discuss this further.

Problem four: The document itself contains conflicts as well as other problems. (Example) On page 2 in capitalized and underlined format, the following statement appears: *We want and need to know your feelings in regard to each one of us so each elder may consider your sentiments and determine whether he should continue to serve as one of your elders or not.* In the **Please Note** section added without knowledge of at least three of the elders, read the statement marked **IMPORTANT**. *The elders will not see the returned "sentiment" sheets, so your sentiments and any comments you make will not be seen by them. (???)*

Recently, there was a Tuesday evening meeting involving the elders, deacons, and several men of the congregation. Phil and Eddy taped the meeting and have the tapes. You might be able to get a copy from them. At the regular Sunday afternoon elders' meeting that week, Guy Elliott and Bobby Watts each read a statement asking Daryl Barker to resign. (Bobby brought out in his statement that if Daryl would resign, it might get the

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three deacons—White, Kogucz, Allen—to settle down.) In a later meeting, Phil Pope read a statement asking James French to resign because he (Pope) could not work with him. Phil ended his statement to James French with “*It is with deep regret that we no longer recognize you as an Elder and therefore ask you for your resignation.*”

Maxie has stated to me that he wished Daryl and James would resign. He then asked me to use my personal friendship with them to persuade them to resign. I never mentioned this to either man until I resigned last Sunday. You will never know how disturbed I was when I realized that the mailing that went out to the congregation had been going through a continuous process of change and was not the one that the full eldership had seen. The first statement in the added Please Note section regarding the signing pattern of the seven elders was very biased especially since Daryl Barker’s note of objection was not printed and James French was never contacted after he saw the original document.

Brother Avon Malone stopped me in the church parking lot on Friday of last week to express to me his concern about the process specifically and the divisiveness it could create in the congregation. He suggested a plan in which Bobby Watts and I would try to work out a process so the seven elders could work together. (He suggested us because we were the longest tenured elders.) I told him I would be agreeable to try and he said he would contact Bobby and seek his agreement. He also asked me to try to contact Bobby. I finally reached Bobby by phone on Saturday morning and asked him if he had talked to Brother Malone and he said he had. I asked him if we needed to meet and talk about it and he said no, the mailing had already gone out. Finally, I said, “Well, Bobby, I guess there is not anything we can talk about.” He said, “Nope”, and the conversation ended.

I have been told by many elders and former elders that I would know when it was time to leave. I recognized at that point that it was time to leave and prepared my resignation letter for June 23, 2002.

The dilemma I struggled with until Sunday morning was whether I should just pack up and sneak away with no concern for the congregation (which would have been much easier) or address the congregation. I could not equate sneaking away with the responsibilities I accepted when you selected me to serve as an elder. For those of you critical of my decision, I apologize to you. For those who understood the responsibility, I thank you.

The remainder of this letter will be brief answers to questions I have been asked. They are not arranged in any format and will not be in full detail to conserve space.

Is David Miller responsible for Johnny Ramsey, Don Simpson, and Gary Fallis leaving or being asked to resign? Yes. Did David Miller charge three elders in his resignation statement? Yes, he also used church supplies and personnel to copy the statement and distribute to members. Did David Miller require Johnny Ramsey and Don Simpson to sign a contract in order to continue teaching in the PTS? He tried. Johnny Ramsey refused and soon left. Don Simpson did sign. This was not known by the eldership until recently, and Brown Trail is certainly fortunate that these two brethren do not believe in taking other brethren to court. The contract form was illegal and could have exposed Brown Trail to triple damage liability.

Have three deacons brought charges against three elders? Yes, even though they refer to them as “concerns”, the document refers to the three elders as “those accused” and states “To bring these charges is difficult for us”. Did the eldership bring these charges to a conclusion? No, the deacons refused four times to meet according to Matthew 18 and were finally told to put their charges in writing. The three elders were told to respond in writing. Even though continued attempts were made by the three elders to get the three deacons to follow Mathew 18 after they delivered their answers in writing, they have refused and the eldership allows them to continue on with further “investigations” and “new charges”. Were the charges brought by David Miller ever

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addressed by the eldership? No, there has never been any action taken. I requested the eldership address and come to a final conclusion two weeks ago. I was told by Phil Pope (chair for the month) that I should go to Dave. (??)

Are the Williams/Yeck letter and the Cook letter all lies? No. Were you ever asked to resign as an elder? Yes, more than once by Gil Holt.

Brethren, Janie and I have been members here together since 1964 when we married. We saw our children born physically and spiritually in this congregation. We have so many friendships and special people in our lives here. I will not be communicating to the Brown Trail congregation after this letter but I will answer questions directed to me by phone. We have been struggling since late February with the reality that the situation was deteriorating so rapidly that it would soon be impossible for us to serve and worship here if it continued. Discovering about four weeks ago that eldership functions were not inclusive of all the elders you selected and then entering into a reevaluation activity that is, at best, questionable and liberal made our departure eminent. Our love for you has not and will not change. We will keep you all in our prayers and request you do the same for us. When we meet in the community, we will greet you as Christian brothers and hope you do the same. We pray that reason will prevail, and you will not follow man and drift toward liberalism but follow the Bible. May God bless us all.

In Christian Love,

Jimmy McKenzie

### **July 19, 2002**

Dear Brown Trail Brethren,

Last Sunday, when Bobby Watts took on the task of informing the congregation, he said, .I.m not even totally informed myself.. Why is that? I have personally seen Bobby refuse information that would have shed light on this situation. What prompted Bobby to say what he did last Sunday night? There were a number of inconsistencies and conspicuous gaps in Bobby.s account and a number of embellishments. At best, it was misleading.

Why did Johnny Ramsey, Gary Fallis, Don Simpson, and several students repeatedly approach the eldership about the school? Why did Daryl Barker, Jimmy McKenzie, and I expend so much effort trying to resolve the conflict? Bobby and Dave would have you to believe all of us are unjustified in our actions. **MOST ALARMING OF ALL, WHY DID BOBBY USE AS HIS KEY PIECE OF EVIDENCE A LETTER WRITTEN BY GARY FALLIS THAT GARY RESCINDED YEARS AGO?** Why would he even dream of asking Gary about being coerced to write it? Was Bobby suspicious? (Incidentally, Gary has no recollection of being asked that question.)

If a brother has publicly slandered brethren, should we tolerate it (2 Timothy 3:2-5)? If preachers have habitually overruled the eldership.s decisions, should we tolerate it (Hebrews 13:17)? If false doctrine is being taught, should we tolerate it (2 Peter 2:1)? If an elder is hiding a preacher.s sins, should we tolerate it (1 Timothy 5:22)? If a brother has given false witness about another, should we tolerate it (Matthew 15:19)? If a brother has woven a tale of deceit to divert attention from his ungodliness, should we ignore it (Romans 1:29)? If a brother tries to enforce cultic discipline on another brother, should we tolerate it (Galatians 2:4)? I had been working with Daryl Barker and Jimmy McKenzie to address these problems that had arisen at Brown Trail. Bobby Watts has been operating against us, portraying our sincere efforts as mischief. He along with the three

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elders, three deacons, and Maxie Boren has been on a campaign to oust Daryl, Jimmy, and me. They have promoted Dave Miller's side of the story which they call the .truth. and have chastised the congregation for discussing the other side of the story which they call .gossip, lies, and rumors..

Is a man guilty of the sin of division when he exposes sin? If so, then Jesus is guilty (Matthew 10:34; 23:1-39), Paul is guilty (Galatians 2:11; 1 Timothy 1:20; 2 Timothy 2:17; 4:14), and John is guilty (3 John 9-11). Truth causes division and lays bare the hearts of men. Informing the church of sin (Matthew 18:17) is not the sowing of discord the Lord condemns. They cannot justly accuse me of division because I have made known the sins of some brethren. The sinners who refuse to acknowledge their sins are the ones guilty of division.

When I became an elder in the Lord's church, I took on the obligation to watch over souls (Hebrews 13:17; Galatians 6:1). I have taken that responsibility seriously. In that role I have had to contend with sins firmly entrenched in the church. I will relate to you just a few facts concerning this great sin that has been hidden from the members of the Brown Trail church. This sin started with a few men and now the whole body of Christians at Brown Trail is engulfed in the division.

Brethren, it may be hard to accept that one of the current elders has been involved in this controversy of division since almost the beginning. Though initially Bobby Watts strongly opposed Everett's conduct, he reversed and has become one of the most committed members to the faction that has grown around Dave Miller. This faction has proven a willingness to do practically anything to protect the image of their icon. They have sought to utterly destroy anyone who opposes Dave's conduct. Read the rest of the story and judge for yourselves whether Bobby provided an adequate account.

For years, Dave, Johnny, Gary, and Don worked together harmoniously. Students were not afraid to approach Dave, a man with a willing ear and constructive advice. In 1995, a student named Everett Chambers arrived. He had been in the Boston-Crossroads Movement for a few years but had left. He once remarked to a member at Brown Trail how he moved high up the ranks of that cult because he was a master at manipulation.

While Everett was a student, the atmosphere of Brown Trail School of Preaching changed. Communication between the faculty and director deteriorated as Everett was inserted between them. Dave used Everett to make announcements to the student body and to issue instructions to the faculty. Everett was functioning as a Dean though he was a student. Dave asked the elders to hire Everett as his assistant. They granted his request but stipulated that he not teach in the school. After Everett graduated in December 1996, Dave ignored the elders and placed him in the classroom as an instructor. Throughout 1997, Gary, Don, and Johnny brought their concerns to the elders. A number of students also brought concerns of Everett's conduct. In addition to the turmoil in the school, it was discovered that Everett entered the country fraudulently via a marriage of convenience. Furthermore, he lied on his application to Brown Trail, saying he was not married even though he was at the time. The elders reasserted their ruling that Everett not teach in the school. Again, Dave ignored it. It was several weeks into 1998 before Dave complied with the directive given in December 1997.

An unusual relationship had developed between Dave and Everett that drove a wedge between Dave and the faculty, Dave and the students, and Dave and the elders. In a letter to the elders dated December 24, 1997, Dave wrote, .I have asked him [Everett] to function as my legs, voice, and eyes. and .Such is an indication of. How much I have come to rely upon him [Everett].. Some years later, Everett admitted to me that Dave cannot run the school without him and that he instructed Dave in every move to make.

Between December 1997 and January 1998, the eldership did an about-face concerning Dave and Everett. The faculty was called in and Roy Bellows declared to them that Dave was .the boss.. Bobby Watts, who had previously said the eldership would not tolerate Everett, was in full agreement. This was when the division in

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the eldership started.

Dave allowed Everett to establish a cultic atmosphere in the school of preaching. They convicted men of non-existent sin to elicit a confession. (This is a known cultic tactic to lower self-esteem and break the wills of those they wish to control.) They aired students' personal problems before the entire student body, contrary to Matthew 18:15. They, however, refused to accept criticism, accusing those approaching them of pride, rebellion, and a wicked heart. Faculty and students were forbidden from discussing school problems with the eldership without the approval of Dave or Everett. Any discussion of the school administration among students or faculty was labeled the sin of gossip. Dave became unapproachable by anyone except Everett. The letter by Kevin Yeck provides an accurate description of the school under Dave and Everett.

Dave accused Johnny Ramsey, Don Simpson, and Gary Fallis of sin in that they discussed school problems with the elders without Dave's permission. Several students were accused of the same sin. Dave sought for their removal based on that sin.

Don Simpson was forced to sign an illegal contract that forbade him from discussing school matters with faculty or elders. As soon as the elders started investigating Everett's misconduct in August 2001, Dave and Everett worked overtime to sow discord in the student body. With Everett gone, Dave went out of control, targeting Gary, some students, and three of the elders. All this happened before Guy Elliott, Eddy Parker, and Phil Pope were appointed elders. They rejected the information we provided them and developed closed minds to these facts. As an illustration of their mindset, Eddy, Bobby, and Phil did a return to sender on Kevin Yeck's letter. Eddy Parker also has declared, "I am a Dave Miller man. (1 Corinthians 1:12). These four elders are living up to that philosophy. Instead of trying to restore Dave's lost soul, they have focused their efforts on removing the three elders who were trying to address the sin in the church.

They have bolstered the Dave Miller faction by overstepping their authority as elders. Where is the Biblical authority for telling brethren not to discuss church matters among themselves? Where is the Biblical authority for throwing out elders who have not been convicted of sin? Why were the men of the church forbidden to tell the women about the meeting Eddy Parker called to save Dave's job? Why was there a secret meeting of about 35 men with four elders and Dave? Why did the four elders conduct business as if the other three did not exist? Is this the church of Christ or a Masonic Lodge?

These elders allowed the division to spill over into the congregation. They encouraged an ongoing investigation of the three elders. They allowed Dave to circulate his highly divisive resignation letter in the congregation. They finalized the division by sending out a letter for reevaluation of elders.

They are essentially holding a Court of Inquisition to stamp out anyone who does not hold to Dave's innocence. Critics of the three elders are applauded while critics of Dave's faction are "sowers of discord." Maxie has been functioning as their Inquisitor, weighing heavy on the congregation to repent for "gossiping." Carefully orchestrated meetings have denied the opposition a chance to speak. I was twice denied the opportunity to speak and I was an elder!

Maxie led the four elders in the recent elder evaluations. This vote was not a measure of the scriptural qualifications of the elders. It was not even an accurate measure of the sentiments of the membership! Of the 375 ballots sent out only 165 (44%) were returned and of those about 150 (40%) counted as votes. Therefore, all it took to disqualify was a negative response from at least 38 members. Furthermore, members were discouraged from investigating the matter. They were essentially a jury asked to decide without seeing evidence unrighteous judgment (John 7:24). Elders are to be appointed by compliance to scriptural qualifications not the opinions of men. They are to be removed based upon sin (1 Timothy 5:19-20) . not

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the opinions of men. I opposed the vote because it was unscriptural, ungodly, and divisive. It has served to further a split in this congregation.

Maxie has made an about-face on what should be done about this division. He previously agreed with Jimmy, Daryl, and me. After a meeting with the four ruling elders, he was promoted to Director of the School of Preaching. He was promised a raise and all the traveling time for gospel meetings he needed to promote the School of Preaching.

Apparently, these four elders cannot speak for themselves. They are lost without a leader. Dave Miller had been directing them. Now Maxie Boren is taking Dave's place. It is amazing how preachers think they have the right to direct the eldership and the church. A preacher running the eldership is unscriptural, and it leads to problems in the Lord's church. (Note Rubel Shelly and Max Lucado.) Evangelistic rule (a preacher running the church) has unfortunately become entrenched at Brown Trail. Dave has been at the helm for the last five years. He has never submitted to the eldership. He has threatened the fires of hell to elders who opposed him. He chose to resign rather than admit sin and repent. Maxie took up the reins where Dave left off. In like manner, he has openly slandered and falsely accused Jimmy McKenzie on behalf of the four elders. He is not standing for the truth.

With Dave resigning, these four elders needed another evangelistic ruler (Pastor?) to guide them. Apparently, they have to follow a man because they cannot convict the gainsayer or evangelistic rulers (Pastors?) as the scriptures demand of them (Titus 1:9; Jeremiah 17:5, 7). It is a very sad day for the Lord's church when the leaders have to follow a man before the Lord and the truth of his word. These men who have been promoting this sin of division refuse to follow the truth of God's word and still give full support to this sin and sinners. These three elders, Guy, Phil, and Eddy are just as guilty as Everett, Dave, and Bobby. Maxie has joined in on their sin. Everything these men do promotes more division in the Lord's body.

It is hard to believe that two men like Dave and Maxie can preach the truth like they do, but yet have another way of living it. When you really analyze their ways, it appears that more money for personal gain is dominating their lives. At Brown Trail, Dave had a big comprehensive salary, a secondary salary for teaching in the school, a percentage of money raised for the school and TV, money from the sale of his writings, and money from preaching around the country (46 per year). I suggested that all the elders and deacons resign and new elders and deacons be appointed. It was a good plan to follow that would have stopped the division in the Lord's body. Many other brethren suggested the same thing to these elders. About a hundred people stood up in agreement one Wednesday night. Maxie Boren shot down this idea, saying that we do not need the elders to resign. As Bobby said Sunday morning when he rescinded his resignation, the remaining eldership did not accept these resignations along with Maxie.. (A preacher can refuse to accept an elder's resignation?)

Maxie should go back and listen to his sermon on June 9th .Dwell Together In Unity.. He should really have ears to hear what the spirit says to the churches. Remember Philippians 1:27, .let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ.that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one soul striving for the faith of the gospel.. Also remember John 17 where Jesus prayed that all be one and dwell in unity. Does your stand for division of the body fit these scriptures you preached? You really do not care about unity or division as long as you have the power on your side. Dave's life displays the same tactics. It's time you both confess and repent and stop dividing this body of the Lord's people.

I have been accused of being easily angered. There are some cases where I have been abrupt with people, but I have apologized to them. I take the Ephesians 4:6 seriously. Keep in mind that you do not know what is in my heart. I do not hate any of my brethren. Furthermore, my accusers need to examine themselves. They have been abrupt and have done far worse things. Some have wagged their fingers in faces. Some have yelled across the

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room. Some have belittled their brethren. Some have stormed out of the room. One elder kicked a chair on his way out. If I needed to resign, all needed to resign.

Anger is not always sin. Jesus was angry at hardness of heart (Mark 3:5). The Bible is filled with people who acted out of righteous indignation. Throughout history, God has been angered with sinners. There is something wrong with a child of God if sin does not upset him. I am very upset at the sin entrenched at Brown Trail. That is why I have been working to expose it so it can be handled. We need to restore the rule of scripture at Brown Trail. We need an eldership that is committed to ruling in line with scripture. We need a preacher who is committed to truth. If we do not do this, the Lord will remove our candlestick from his presence (Revelation 2:5) and we will cease to be the church of Christ.

Bobby accused me of renewing a rift between Johnny and Dave by mailing Dave's letter of January 2000. While there was a meeting between Johnny and Dave, their rift had not been healed as Bobby would have you believe. People who talked to Johnny the day of the meeting can tell you that Johnny was not happy with the outcome. Johnny received an apology, but he was waiting to see the fruits of repentance. I mailed that letter to Johnny to give him a chance to respond to accusations about him circulated behind his back. That letter, which was shared with a few people at Brown Trail, sullied Johnny's reputation. Keep in mind that Dave intended to send it when he wrote it, but Jimmy McKenzie stopped him. Dave even told the elders in September 2001 that he wonders if God would hold him accountable for never sending that letter. Bobby, you are making that incident into something it was not.

Bobby also accused me of being a liar. First, he cited my remarks on Wednesday night in which I said .Not one brother has accused me of a specific sin with witnesses. Yes, people did come to me, but they only brought general impressions of me not specific sins and no witnesses. How is this a lie on my part? Second, Bobby said I voted to approve of Maxie's evaluation letter at one meeting but denied that I voted for it the next meeting. The truth is that Jim McKenzie, Dan Flournoy, and I voiced disapproval of the letter at the first meeting. (How can Bobby honestly say no one had an objection?) As the discussion progressed, there was a vote on Eddy Parker's recommendation of a percentage. There was never a vote on the letter. I have consistently disapproved of it, as evidenced by the fact I refused to sign the letter. Bobby is twisting the story to accuse me of lying. Third, Bobby said I agreed to resign if I did not receive the necessary 75% vote. I told them from the beginning that I would not honor that ungodly, unscriptural, divisive vote and that they would have to throw me out if they wanted me out. They threw me out, but they did not convict me of sin.

Brethren, but the facts are on record. These records are open and available to anyone who asks for them. Some of this documentation will be posted on the web in the near future. You are welcome to get your own copies by contacting Jimmy McKenzie, Daryl Barker, or myself. I still love all the Lord's family at Brown Trail Church of Christ. My prayer is that the elders will stop following men (preachers) and make the decision to conform to God's word. Their responsibility for souls has greatly increased. I hope Dave's spell on the congregation will be broken and people will wake up and see the height from which they have fallen. Brethren demand these men resign, as some did and all promised they would. Install a new set of elders and deacons, as a number of deacons have participated in this sin. Brethren, contend for the faith, the truth, the Gospel of Christ.

In Christian Love,  
James L. French  
4006 Southwood Dr.  
Colleyville, TX 76034  
817-656-2918  
For more information, please call  
or come by.

## *The Dave Miller Statement Issued 9/23/05...And Continuing Controversy*

### Some Questions for Bobby, Phil, Eddy, Guy, Dave, and Maxie.

- 1) Who called a private meeting of about 35 Brown Trail members? Dave? Who led the meeting? Dave? What was the topic? Did it concern how to remove three elders? Were attendees sworn to secrecy? Why?
- 2) Bobby, you read a letter by Gary Fallis to prove that Johnny Ramsey led a conspiracy against Dave. WHY DID YOU NOT MENTION THAT GARY RETRACTED THAT LETTER YEARS AGO?
- 3) Bobby, why did you not mention the fact that Dave overruled an explicit directive from the elders when he placed Everett in the classroom? Isn't that an important fact establishing the relationship between Dave and the eldership?
- 4) Bobby, why did you leave out the fact that numerous faculty and student complaints are what prompted Daryl and me to begin investigating?
- 5) If only five men really know what happened in the school of preaching, why were they not invited to address the congregation Sunday night to get out the full truth?
- 6) Dave Miller has taught that people will be held accountable at judgment for acting upon partial information without investigating. Why have Brown Trail members been forbidden from investigating? Why is that called gossiping?
- 7) Why did the eldership summarily dismiss the Kevin Yeck letter and the Randy Cook Letter without addressing the facts? If they are .all lies. prove it fact-by-fact.
- 8) Brown Trail seems to be struggling with Biblical doctrine concerning marriage. Was Everett.s marriage of convenience .just a piece of paper?. What is the position of the eldership on such marriages? What is Maxie.s position? What is Dave.s position?
- 9) Dave was allowed to circulate his letter of resignation. The congregation was told discussing the situation would be gossiping. Dave was allowed to call a secret meeting. Still the congregation was urged not to talk about the situation (i.e. the voting letter). Bobby presented essentially Dave.s case on Sunday. The congregation is told to put it behind us and never speak of it again. Are you censoring the non-Dave accounts?
- 10) Maxie, I suggested that all the elders and deacons resign and new ones be appointed. A significant number of the congregation agreed with me. Why is reinstating Bobby and Phil the .only way that seems right?. Why is removing me from the eldership .only way that seems right?.
- 11) Several have approached Dave and Everett according to Matthew 18. Why do Dave and Everett refuse to answer any of the charges? Why am I accused of not having love for their souls?
- 12) Bobby, Phil, Eddy, Guy, and Maxie, please answer this question. Is Everett guilty in this ordeal? Is Dave guilty? Is there guilt in defending the sins of a sinner?

Brown Trail Elder Reaffirmation Letter

How It Came About

## *The Dave Miller Statement Issued 9/23/05...And Continuing Controversy*

Maxie Boren proposed the elder reaffirmation idea and saw to its completion, despite widespread opposition from the Brown Trail membership. Maxie first presented the letter to the elders on Wednesday, June 19, 2002. The four elders (Bobby Watts, Phil Pope, Guy Elliott, and Eddy Parker) signed it immediately. James French and Jimmy McKenzie objected and did not sign it. (Daryl Barker was absent from that particular meeting due to illness.) Dan Flournoy, who was invited to the meeting along with Maxie, also expressed his opposition to the idea. That evening, Jimmy took the letter to Daryl's house and left it with him overnight. Daryl did not sign it, and he wrote his objections below the signature area. (The "Please Note" section was not part of the original document.) Thursday, the letter was retrieved from Daryl. That day, Maxie contacted Jimmy (who was then out of town) and expressed to him that he wanted to get the letter out the same day. Following that conversation, Jimmy instructed his wife to go to the building and print his name on the letter along with his objection. By the time she arrived, Daryl's objections had already been omitted, and the document was again blank below the signatures. After Mrs. McKenzie left and before it was mailed, the "Please Note" section was added. Daryl, James, and Jimmy never saw the final draft of the letter before it was sent out. Friday, 375 of these letters were mailed to Brown Trail members. Two days later, Jimmy and Daryl resigned, as this letter and the shenanigans surrounding it were the "last straw" for them. The results were tabulated July 6 by Maxie Boren and Dan Flournoy. (Dan never approved of the idea and participated in the count only because the elders asked him to do so.) James did not resign as he objected to the elder reaffirmations from the beginning, as evidenced by the fact he never signed the letter. The results were announced to the congregation on July 10, and James was forced out of the eldership on July 14. You can hear the events of those two days on the [Audio Page](#). As James French asked on July 10, what sin did he commit against 103 brethren that they wanted him removed as elder? If you are a Brown Trail member who voted against him, please email him at [james.french@brown-trail-truth.com](mailto:james.french@brown-trail-truth.com) to explain why.

### Reaffirmation Results

	For	Against	No Opinion	A % For	B % For	Of 375 Ballots Mailed		
						% For	% Against	<sup>c</sup> % No Opinion
<b>Guy Elliott</b>	120	31	14	79%	73%	32%	8%	60%
<b>James French</b>	46	103	17	31%	28%	12%	27%	61%
<b>Eddy Parker</b>	115	34	16	77%	70%	31%	9%	60%
<b>Phil Pope</b>	115	32	18	78%	70%	31%	9%	60%
<b>Bobby Watts</b>	121	32	12	79%	73%	32%	9%	59%

A - ignoring No Opinion [FOR ÷ (FOR + AGNST)]

B - including No Opinion [FOR ÷ (FOR + AGNST + NOP)]

C - including those who chose not to vote [(NOP + NOVOTE) ÷ 375]

*Eight letters were received stating the process was unscriptural.*

**The elders chose to use "75% of those returned" as the required approval rating remain in office. Why was calculation method (A) used as opposed to method (B)? Why ignore the "no opinion" votes as if they were not returned? Would supporters of James French be likely to return a ballot considering that Barker, French, and McKenzie openly opposed the entire process? Do these results indicate a clear mandate from the congregation for the four remaining elders?**

June 20,2002

### TO THE ADULT MEMBERS OF THE BROWN TRAIL CHURCH OF CHRIST

Dear Christian brother or sister,

## *The Dave Miller Statement Issued 9/23/05...And Continuing Controversy*

This letter is being sent to you by the elders of the Brown Trail congregation in a sincere and earnest effort to resolve once and for all a matter that has been troublesome to the church here for the last three or four years.

The problem to which we refer began some time ago in the School Of Preaching, when there arose a disagreement between the director of the School and Instructors in the School over the manner in which the School was being operated and directed. It would be nearly impossible for us to go into detail in relating the “full” problem to you (especially since a number of students were involved in the dissension from time to time), because of the very complex nature of all that has transpired. Suffice it to say that the problem has been ongoing far too long and has been a source of great consternation within the eldership, resulting in strong disagreement among us, with two entirely different perspectives reached regarding a solution. As we all surely know, good men can and do disagree on matters that fall into the realm of judgment and opinion as is evidenced in the Biblical example of Paul and Barnabas disagreeing concerning whether to take John Mark with them on their 2<sup>nd</sup> missionary journey (Acts 15:36-40). Their disagreement was so intense that it divided these two great men for a duration of time. Thankfully, later on, Paul regained confidence in John Mark as is clearly seen in his mentioning of him in a favorable way in subsequent writings (Col. 4:10-11; Philemon 24, and II Tim. 4:11). We pray fervently that with the passing of time any strained feelings there may be will abate, and we may continue to work together as beloved co-laborers in the kingdom.

The **present facts are** that everyone who was involved in any way in the School Of Preaching problem is **NOW** no longer with the School: those men being Dave Miller, Everett Chambers, Johnny Ramsey, Don Simpson, and Gary Fallis. It is not our prerogative to sit in judgment concerning any of them, as that belongs to the Lord (Rom. 14:4). With some divergence of viewpoint, we generally agree they are all good men who differed, even as we ourselves. What “was done is done” and **NOW should be considered** in the past. As brother Dan Flournoy astutely observed, “It is just impossible to unscramble eggs.” While the eldership has had and still does have strong disagreement over the best solution to the School problems we deliberated about for so long, **we recognize the facts just stated, and are desirous of putting this problem to rest once and for all and getting on with the Lord’s work here.**

We further realize that in the extended process of our laboriously wrestling with the complicated issues involved in the problem, we failed to shepherd the flock as we ought to have done. For this we are exceedingly sorry, and we confess our sin of omission in this matter and seek forgiveness from God and the congregation. We pledge to do better as soon as we can get things sorted out.

Lastly, we also realize that in these past few months, “evaluations” have been made in the minds of many of you concerning the overall performance of your elders, collectively and individually. Hopefully, you have seen the positives in each of us as well as whatever negatives you perhaps detected. **We WANT and NEED to know your feelings in regard to each one of us so each elder may consider your sentiments and determine whether he should continue to serve as one of your elders or not. We know that if the sheep don’t have confidence in a shepherd’s leadership, it makes no sense for him to continue in that role. Please pray about this matter, and fill out the attached evaluation sheet with your honest and objective sentiments as soon as possible, and sign it. Then hand it to either brother Maxie Boren or brother Dan Flournoy. The aggregate information will be given to the elders for prayerful consideration. Each one of us has agreed to abide by the sentiments of the congregation as to whether he will continue to serve as an elder, or resign. OUR NUMBER ONE INTEREST IS FOR THE GOOD OF THE CHURCH HERE AT BROWN TRAIL, AS WE KNOW THAT IS YOUR INTEREST TOO. REGARDLESS OF THE OUTCOME PERTAINING TO THE ELDERS INDIVIDUALLY, LET US ALL WORK TOGETHER TO KEEP THIS CONGREGATION UNITED!**

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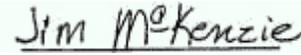
In Christian love,

\_\_\_\_\_ (Daryl Barker),



(Guy T. Elliott),

\_\_\_\_\_ (James French),



(Jim McKenzie), *-with serious concern about the effect of this procedure on this congregation*



(Eddy Parker),



(Phil Pope),



(Bobby Watts).

**PLEASE NOTE**

All seven elders read the above letter, but two opted not to sign it.

**PLEASE** turn your expression of sentiment in concerning the seven elders by July 3<sup>rd</sup> to either Maxie Boren or Dan Flournoy.

**IMPORTANT**---The elders will **NOT** see the returned “sentiment” sheets, so your sentiments and any comments you make will **NOT** be seen by them. Only the tallied results will be given to them.

Remove the Leaven from Brown Trail

No Christian elder, preacher or deacon can deny there is sin in the Lord’s body at Brown Trail. The sin of division has been there since 1997. That lump of sin was placed there by the cult discipler formerly of the Crossroads/Boston Movement and the International Church of Christ. The leaven in that lump has consumed at least two preachers, four elders and three deacons.

Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, even as ye are unleavened. For our passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ: wherefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. (1 Corinthians 5:6-8)

Brethren the only thing that can purge out the old leaven is confession of sin and repentance. The only sin that will keep man from entering heaven is the failure to repent.

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From the New Covenant and the coming of John the Baptist there has been the gospel message, "Repent for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand." (Matthew 3:2). The gospel message of our Lord is filled with the command to repent. "So he went out and preached that people should repent" (Mark 6:12). I tell you, no, but unless you repent you will all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3-5)

The Apostles preached repentance

Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray the Lord, if perhaps the thought of thy heart shall be forgiven thee. (Acts 8:22)

The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked; but now he commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent: (Acts 17:30)

And the Lord's servant must not strive, but be gentle towards all, apt to teach, forbearing, in meekness correcting them that oppose themselves; if peradventure God may give them repentance unto the knowledge of the truth, and they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him unto his will. (2 Tim 2:24-26)

All of these brethren know they are guilty of the sin of division in the Body of Christ. Preachers preaching the truth but practicing sin, elders and deacons following men of sin and sinners.

When are they going to confess their sins one to another and publicly as they have made and forced their sin of division in the body of Christ? (James 5:16; 1 John 1:8-10)

James French

## **Repentances at Brown Trail**

Last Updated September 14, 2002

Rumors have been circulating that there has been repentance on the part of Dave Miller and four elders at Brown Trail. If that were true, it would be wonderful news. Unfortunately, those rumors are overstating fact.

What is repentance? It is essentially the changing of one's mind. In that simple sense even God has repented (Genesis 6:6; Exodus 32:14). Yet the command given to men to repent (Matthew 4:17; Acts 3:19, 17:30; 2 Peter 3:9; et al.) requires more than just a change of mind. Sorrow for one's actions is not repentance, but such sorrow in a godly heart should lead to repentance (2 Corinthians 7:9-10). When we discover that our thoughts or our actions are out of harmony with God (i.e. wrong and sinful) we should recognize our error, undo what damage we can, and turn away from the sin for the future.

God expects us to bring forth fruits worthy of repentance (Matthew 3:8; Acts 26:20). The very fact that fruits are required suggests the existence of "sham repentance." Such was the case in the days of Malachi when men profaned the law yet put on a theatrical show with their offerings. We can read how God accepts such religion done to be seen by men.

And this again ye do: ye cover the altar of Jehovah with tears, with weeping, and with sighing, insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, neither receiveth it with good will at your hand. (Malachi 2:13)

Are we to forgive a brother who repents of sin? Absolutely (Luke 17:3-4). Yet how do we forgive someone

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who has not repented? God forgives based upon repentance (Acts 2:38, 8:22). Can we forgive a brother whom God has not forgiven?

Let us now look at the facts of the reported repentances at Brown Trail.

### Everett Chambers

Everett has not repented publicly and has made no known admissions of fault. When Everett was removed as Dean of Students and given the opportunity to remain as an instructor, the elders asked him to meet with them. He refused to speak with them, only staying long enough to submit a written resignation. The elders requested another meeting with him to discuss his soul. He refused, saying he was no longer under their oversight. Since Everett left Brown Trail in October 2001, James French has called him at home twice, trying to arrange for a meeting to discuss his soul. Everett has refused to meet. Ashley Williams wrote a letter to Everett in February 2002, encouraging him to repent. Everett did not respond. (He did leave a message on Ashley's answering machine, but when Ashley returned his call and left a message, Everett never responded.) When Everett came to the Brown Trail graduation in May 2002, James again tried to arrange a meeting with him to discuss his soul, but Everett refused. James also wrote a letter to him in July 2002. Everett has not responded. He has complained to Dave Miller that James is harassing him about meeting with him. Bobby Watts, with the presumable endorsement of the other three elders, charged James with harassing Everett about repentance.

### Dave Miller

Dave Miller has made no known admissions of fault. On July 10, 2002, Dave did publicly apologize for perhaps coming across as unkind or inappropriate in his stand for truth and opposition of wrong. Yet, he assured the audience that he honestly acted with the best interests of Brown Trail and the kingdom at heart. He also apologized if he has unknowingly offended anyone. The entire statement is available online at the [Audio page](#). As in the case of Everett, Dave received several letters from James French. He even received one from Ashley Williams. He has yet to respond to them. Dave denies any of the charges brought against him at Brown Trail. His letter of August 1, 2002 thanked those who "dismissed such outrageous allegations outright" and criticized those who "assumed them to be true." Where is the repentance?

### Bobby Watts

Bobby Watts made a public statement on July 28, 2002.<sup>1</sup> He said that he sinned. He hadn't been the shepherd he should have been. He failed to shield Brown Trail from turmoil. He promised to do the very best he could and help heal wounds and move the flock toward harmony.

### Phil Pope

Phil Pope made a public statement on July 28, 2002.<sup>1</sup> He confessed sin and said he was repenting of being a part of the turmoil. He confessed neglecting duties and asked forgiveness. He admitted that he made mistakes and bad judgment calls. He confessed anger to the point that it was difficult to pray for those who had sown discord.

### Guy Elliott

Guy Elliott made a public statement on July 28, 2002.<sup>1</sup> He said his heart has been heavy since a month after becoming an elder and that he had not functioned as an elder should due to distractions. He said he wants to be the kind of elder Brown Trail members would want to follow. He confessed that he sinned, repented, and asked for prayers. He said let the healing begin. He repented of acting ungodly and not having wisdom to stop the problems. He asked for forgiveness.

### Eddy Parker

Eddy Parker made a public statement on July 28, 2002.<sup>1</sup> He mentioned Luke 9:23 ("If any man would come

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after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me”). He said two brothers who he has great confidence in, sat down and said they’d seen pride in Eddy. For this he was sorry and asked forgiveness from Brown Trail for the pride. He said he wants to go to Heaven and take as many of Brown Trail as possible. He stated that he needs the help of other Christians. He said because of what’s happened at Brown Trail, her name has been “drug through the mud.” He ended with much tears.

### Maxie Boren

Maxie Boren has not repented publicly other than the general admission that he knows he has sinned and is sorry for it. James French has written him several letters. So far, Maxie has only responded to one, and he claimed James French is the cause of the division.

## COMMENTS

Most of what has been repented of are items we (the authors of the website) were not aware of or had not held against them. There yet remain many conspicuous items that have yet to be repented of.

1. What about the browbeating of BTSOP students, pressuring them to confess sin where there is no sin (i.e. forgetting to bring a dish to a potluck dinner)?
2. What about the slander, false accusations, and character assassinations inflicted against Johnny Ramsey, Don Simpson, and Gary Fallis? There was no conspiracy to remove Dave as Director. There is no sin in expressing concern about church matters to the eldership.
3. What about the contract imposed on Don Simpson? It was illegal and unbiblical. It used pejorative language and established a working relationship even the world would find despicable.
4. What about the slander, false accusations, and character assassinations inflicted against numerous students (Kevin Yeck, Matt Smith, et al.)? A number of students have challenged Everett’s cultic discipline techniques (eliciting unnecessary confessions, publicly airing students’ personal problems, intimidating gestures, verbal shredding, etc.). Some even took their concerns to the elders. Dave and Everett responded by calling them immature, prideful, rebellious, arrogant, evil, and backstabbing.
5. What about the slander, false accusations, and character assassinations inflicted against Daryl Barker, James French, and Jimmy McKenzie? These men were not trying to impose a liberal agenda. They were fighting against ungodly Boston Movement cult discipline, not Biblical discipline. They were not trying to sow discord in the congregation but were attempting to fix an enormous problem. After months of unsuccessful attempts to reform Dave and Everett, they were forced to expose their iniquity.
6. What about the writing and distribution of quintessential divisive document—Dave’s resignation letter? It is an obvious vendetta against Dave’s opponents. Why is it addressed to the brotherhood as well as the eldership? Why sow discord against the elders when he had already decided to leave Brown Trail? Dave read it at a men’s meeting. Church supplies were used to copy it, and at least one church secretary was asked to distribute it to whomever requested it. Others who received it personally from Dave were encouraged to circulate it.
7. What about the campaign to remove three elders? At least one secret meeting was held in which that topic was discussed.
8. What about the elder reaffirmation vote that exacerbated the division in the church? Was it scriptural? If so, was it encouraging righteous judgment (John 7:24) by forbidding members from investigating? Did it

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truly reveal the sentiments of the congregation?

9. What about the current eldership's stand against righteousness? They have wholeheartedly endorsed Dave and recommend him without reservation. Despite all the evil Dave has committed, they maintain he conducted himself with impeccable integrity.
10. What about the lies Bobby Watts told in his July 14, 2002 address to the congregation to tell them what happened?
11. What about the evangelistic rule practiced by Dave, Everett, and Maxie? Dave and Everett fought the elders when they tried to restore pastoral oversight of the school. Maxie refused to let Bobby and Phil resign when they tried to.
12. What about how the four elders (Bobby, Phil, Eddy, and Guy) refused to accept documented proof of Dave's cultic practices? Have they even made an attempt to study the International Church of Christ cult? Anyone who has studied the Boston Movement can recognize it in Dave's "[Authority and Submission](#)" handout and in the [contract](#) Dave required Don Simpson to sign. There are also Boston overtones in Dave's [resignation letter](#), his [report](#) from 1997, and in numerous other documents not yet available online.
13. What about the message sent to the brotherhood that everything is normal and good at Brown Trail?

### NOTES

1. These confessions were recorded on tape, but they have not been released by Brown Trail.

### **OPEN LETTER FROM MAXIE B. BOREN**

#### **GOSPEL PREACHER, BROWN TRAIL CHURCH OF CHRIST**

Because of the malicious rumors about Brown Trail which have been circulating throughout the brotherhood for the past several months, I feel compelled to respond. The elders and myself have tried to take "the high road" and not lower ourselves to the level that a goodly number of our accusers have done. But there comes a time, when so many untrue things have been said and continue to be said that an answer must be given. That time has come.

Please understand that it is almost impossible to clearly communicate in writing to a broad reading audience on a matter of complexity, and especially one concerning which so much misinformation has been distributed. But in spite of that difficulty, **the following is a humble and sincere effort to simply set forth the facts concerning the handling of the problematic situation that arose at the Brown Trail congregation and thus, hopefully dispel the distortions circulating against us. This is going to be a "one and only" response to all the misinformation being disseminated, far and wide. We don't intend to become embroiled in an ongoing controversy with brethren over an internal matter that was handled as best we knew how to handle it.** We believe the Biblical principle of local church autonomy certainly applies in this matter pertaining to Brown Trail...where each congregation is free from a human hierarchical system to handle its own internal affairs in the light of Scripture as is deemed wise. **The bottom line is we did the very best we could, with profound respect for what God's word teaches and guided by its precepts, to solve the internal problem we had as best we possibly could under the circumstances.**

**In setting forth the facts, may I first of all "lay the blame" where it belongs...upon Satan! As**

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you know, the Scriptures depict him as a "roaring lion" walking about in search of prey (I Pet. 5:8). That certainly conveys the idea that he is a formidable adversary because the lion is the "king of beasts." Thus, the apostle referred to him as the "god of this world" (II Cor. 4:4). Satan is indeed the "deceiver of the world" (Rev. 12:9) and the "father of lies" (John 8:44). Satan has many "devices" in his arsenal with which to attack us (II Cor. 2:11). The devil's design for all of us is to bring us to spiritual bankruptcy and eternal ruin. **Satan wants to divide the church and stir-up all kinds of problems for the Cause. Therefore, the instigator of the trouble that came to Brown Trail was Satan!** Tragically, his greatest and most successful ruse was to "take the whole matter" far beyond this congregation and use brethren "near and far" as his pawns to spread rumors from person to person in conversations and in Emails on the Internet, etc. Many brethren, who could not possibly have known all the "ins and outs" as only those of us who were here could know, took pens in hand, stood in judgment from afar, and commenced to condemn us based on "what they had heard." Like sharks on a feeding frenzy, they attacked Brown Trail. How sad, how sad. As Stephen, I pray, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge" (Acts 7:60).

Satan saw Brown Trail, with all its growth and good works (i.e., the School of Preaching, "The Truth In Love" TV program, the annual Ft. Worth Lectureship, etc.) as a prime target. Dating back about four years ago, he set his plan in motion within the School of Preaching, capitalizing on such human frailties as pride, ego, less than good attitudes, stubbornness, the misuse of the tongue, and such like, to create problems. Over time, Satan managed to exploit these traits even further, and to drive wedges between brethren, fracture long standing friendships, and sow dissension within the congregation itself in the Spring of this year. How tragic! **By late June and early July of 2002, the turmoil Satan caused reached a point where "something had to be done" by stouthearted Christian men if the congregation with all of its worthy undertakings was to survive. Up until that point in time, streams of tears had been shed, earnest prayers prayed around the clock, and MUCH effort expended to resolve the matter. All to no avail.** We had tried repeatedly to reason with our brethren in hopes of resolving the crisis. But sometimes, all the well-intended efforts put forth still do not succeed. Finally, with no desire at all to "take sides," but with only the urgent need to solve the problem so we could get on with the Lord's work, **as a last ditch effort to salvage an impossible situation,** I proposed to a hopelessly divided (4/3) eldership to let the congregation express itself as to which of the elders they believed to have remained qualified or which they believed had disqualified themselves in view of I Tim. 3:1 ff. and Titus 1:6 ff. **The reasoning was this: if in fact the members of a local congregation are asked to express themselves in the selection process of elders, why not allow them to express themselves in an "impasse" situation like we had, on whether or not these men so appointed had disqualified themselves or not? The next day, the eldership, as a whole, agreed on the letter.** (In all fairness, only six of the seven elders were present when the letter was discussed in detail...one was home sick. At the conclusion of the meeting, four of the seven elders signed the letter. Two said they would take the letter to the elder who was ill, and indicated the letter would be brought to the church office the next morning. When it arrived, none of the three had signed it. Later that afternoon, the wife of one...who had gone out of town on business... came by and printed his name beside the place for his signature, with a printed reservation beside it.) With that development, the four elders who did sign it, in complete frustration, gave instruction that the letter be sent anyway. (The next Sunday evening, two of the elders opted to resign.) **This letter was called an "expression of sentiment," giving the congregation an opportunity to express itself. As there are no explicit instructions given in the New Testament as to an exact "selection process" of elders, neither are there explicit instructions given as to how to remedy a "problem of magnitude" like Satan had managed to create at Brown Trail. We do not subscribe to the concept of "once an elder always an elder," believing it no more valid than "once saved always saved." An elder can disqualify himself,**

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just like a preacher can default and disqualify himself. When that occurs, such a "situation" must be handled. But how? The Bible does not specifically tell us how. We exercised our best collective judgment in dealing with our specific problem. The ones "from afar" who have taken pens in hand to criticize and condemn us **COULD NOT POSSIBLY KNOW** the "ins and outs" of our internal problem like we did. And yet they from afar sit in judgment as if they were eye witnesses to every action, conversation, and meeting that was held to try to resolve our problems. **There is a lot more in the Bible about NOT bearing false witness, NOT judging falsely, NOT having a condemning spirit, etc., than there is about HOW to solve a problem like we faced.** It might be well for our self-appointed critics to consider that fact.

For example, brother Marvin Weir, a brother whom I respect, and consider a friend, wrote an article in the Oct., 2002 issue of "The Gospel Journal" entitled *Change Agents And Leadership*, wherein there is much with which I agree. But on page 25, I believe he is wrong on two things: **#1---**he insinuates that Brown Trail has adopted the "reaffirming" of elders process of the "change agents." By implication, this "suggests" to the brotherhood that we are imbibing the "change agent" movement, **which is absurd! This congregation stands for the truth as faithfully as any I have known in 48+ years of preaching.** What good for the Cause of Christ is to be gained by leaving the impression that Brown Trail has abandoned fidelity to God's word, when such is absolutely NOT true? Why try to discredit us before the brotherhood, Marvin? That is unfair, uncalled for, and very wrong; and **#2---**he then makes an ill-informed, absolutely false assertion: **"Supporters have a right to know that they have repeatedly used the elder 'reaffirmation/reevaluation' practice."** Dear brother Weir, **that is just plain NOT true! You make it sound like every year or two we "reaffirm/reevaluate" elders.** That is **NOT** the case at all. Wherefore, I ask, **what motivated you to make such a false charge?** Why do you seek to cast a dark cloud over a faithful sister congregation? **The FACTS are: On two occasions, under extreme conditions in each case, we have asked brethren to express themselves in order to try to solve untenable circumstances. Once, in 1990, when Johnny Ramsey, Dave Miller, Don Simpson, and Gary Fallis were asked by the elders that were then serving to help solve a similar problem that existed then, akin action was taken. The only other time was in the more recent situation (June/July of 2002), as noted in the above paragraph. That is a far cry from "repeatedly" using a "reaffirmation/reevaluation" process as Marvin charged. We do NOT subscribe to such as Marvin implies we do, and with just a simple phone call, he could have learned better. On the two occasions mentioned, 12 years apart, we gave the members of this congregation an opportunity to express themselves concerning complex problems of divided elderships. Both times, it was done to try to help solve problems within divided elderships so the church could be at peace and get on with the Lord's work.**

It is interesting to note this statement by brother Weir in the article he wrote under examination, on page 26 of The Gospel Journal, Oct., '02: **"The same people that select one to serve as an elder because he is Scripturally qualified (I Tim. 3:1-7; Tit. 1:5-11) can also reject that one because he no longer meets the Scriptural qualifications. Existing elders can and should reject a fellow elder who is no longer qualified to serve."** **WOW! And AMEN!** Why then, Marvin, do you condemn us for doing what you indicate we had the right to do? **We did exactly what you approved in that statement.** The majority of our elders (four of the seven we had in June) approved and facilitated the action I had suggested, allowing the congregation to express itself. Brother Charles Moore, in his book, "Functioning Leadership In The Church," stated, **"When the elder in question is strongly self-willed and takes the position, 'I will never resign,' the church has an extremely difficult and dangerous problem on its hands. It is impossible to present a formula guaranteed to work in the solution of this problem."** Well, that was the problem we had...we could find no set "formula" in the New Testament as to how to solve it, though

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**WE DID THE BEST WE KNEW HOW TO BE GUIDED BY THE PRINCIPLES LAID DOWN IN SCRIPTURE.** Brother Moore further observed, "When an elder is asked to resign and refuses, there will always be some who rally to his support. Division within the congregation is inevitable." That is exactly what happened at Brown Trail. We regret it profoundly. It broke our hearts, and still does. We didn't want any of this tragic sequence of events to happen. As far as we who are still at Brown Trail are concerned, the "situation" was forced upon us. We had to do something and we did. Whether our judgment was flawless or not, is admittedly questionable. Neither myself, or the four elders that remain, claim infallibility. Thus, we readily admit that the way the "whole thing came down" may not have been the wisest way to handle it. Hindsight is "20/20!" But I can sincerely say that I earnestly tried to the best of my ability to help solve the most difficult church problem I've ever faced.

By the way, before leaving brother Weir's article, let me observe that he quoted from Dub Mowery, a preacher from Oklahoma. **In that quotation, brother Mowery states concerning Dave Miller and myself, that "Both defended the reaffirmation/reevaluation of elders." That is just plain NOT true! What we did defend was the right of a congregation to try to solve an extremely complex and difficult internal problem, in the light of Scripture, as best it can. There is a very BIG difference between Dub Mowery's charge and the facts!** He further states, "I pleaded with those two brethren to use their influence to stop that process at Brown Trail." That statement is so far-fetched as to be ludicrous. How can you stop a process that had already been implemented, and that **brother Mowery knew had been implemented?** What could possibly have been brother Mowery's motive in leaving the impression that he had tried to stop what we had already done? I can't say with certainty. But perhaps he wanted others to think he really "set us straight." The facts are, that in the course of our meeting with him, while he did express himself as being opposed to what we had done, yet he acted very understanding and sympathetic toward our rationale of trying to solve a very difficult problem, **and indicated he would do his best to help allay the criticism that was rampant over the Internet Emails. Instead, within a few days, he was writing such tripe himself.** In an Email he wrote, that was forwarded to us by one of the recipients, he stated, "**...I know that Maxie, Dave, and the four remaining elders are in error in upholding and using the reevaluation process. All of these men need to repent of this unscriptural method of retaining elders.**" In writing such, brother Mowery set himself forth as being "the authority" on the matter. He declares that he "knows" and boldly asserts that what we did was "in error." **Well, I don't agree with brother Mowery. I don't think he is the final authority. We believe that our action in the matter falls into the realm of "opinion/judgment/expediency." While we make no claims of having handled our problem perfectly, yet we reiterate, we did the best we knew how and do not believe we were unscriptural in the way we handled it. But several of our critics, including brother Mowery, have said unequivocally that what we did was unscriptural. But ironically, as brother Weir did in his article, brother Mowery in his Email said, "An elder who becomes disqualified should step down from serving in that capacity. However, many refuse to do so! Therefore, the congregation that selected them when they met the qualifications (I Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9), has the right and responsibility to reject them as elders when they no longer meet those qualifications.**" That is almost verbatim to Marvin's statement. And again, I say, that is exactly the kind of action we took in doing what we did. And yet, brother Mowery accuses us of using "an unscriptural method." **What is unscriptural about it? What is unscriptural about allowing a beleaguered congregation to express itself on such a crucial matter as disqualified elders who by their actions are tearing the church apart?** Question: had our critics been "in our shoes," based on what we knew were the facts, and dealing with the "impasse" of personalities we were dealing with, I wonder how they would have handled it? **While many are quick to condemn what we did as unscriptural, yet they have not offered any "clearly delineated" Scriptural alternative.** I'm

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dubious of fellows who seem to think they "have all the answers" and who are so quick to judge others.

In his excellent book, "Church Administration," the late and honorable **Walter H. Adams**, who served as Dean of Abilene Christian College for years, affirmed that an "elder, deacon, preacher, or teacher may be unqualified or **become disqualified for the position he holds and should, therefore, resign or be relieved of his duties.**" He then quoted from another past preacher of note, **Leslie G. Thomas**, who had written, "If some condition should arise which would cause an elder or deacon to become a detriment to the church, he should remove himself from his position voluntarily; **but if he will not do that, then the congregation, following the principles set forth in I Cor. 10:31 and 14:40, should see to it that he is retired.**" To these conclusions, surely we all agree. A man can become disqualified as an elder without necessarily committing overt sin. How do you deal with such situations? Neither of these esteemed brethren set forth a clear cut answer to that question. If in fact sin is the cause of disqualification, then I Tim. 5:19-21 applies. And that was the case with one elder at Brown Trail: he had disqualified himself in the light of two Scriptures: I Tim. 3:3 and Titus 1:7...being contentious, self-willed, and soon angry, and had sinned in view of Prov. 6:18-19, yet refused to resign although confronted with these facts. Thus, in keeping with I Tim. 5:19-21, he was removed as an elder. **Each congregation which unfortunately faces these kind of situations, should be able to handle it as the elders deem wise, following the principles set forth in Scripture.** Further, brother Adams, in his book, gave several reasons justifying the removal of an elder...one of which was this: "**When he loses the following of a sizeable portion of the congregation. Just what this portion should be is, of course, a matter of opinion.**" Brethren, the above is essentially what we did at Brown Trail. Given the "impossible" set of circumstances which had arisen, we gave the congregation an opportunity to express itself, in view of the Scriptural qualifications of elders, which ones they felt were still qualified and which ones they felt had disqualified themselves in one way or another. This was done "decently and in order" and "objectively" with no "partial slant" given one way or the other. **What is wrong with that?** Brother Adams also quoted from the renowned preacher, **G.C. Brewer**, who had written, "**If an elder becomes unacceptable to a congregation, he should be retired if he will not voluntarily resign.**" A man cannot be over people who will not be under him."

I have conversed with several highly respected gospel preachers about "how" to handle a situation like Brown Trail was in. Some said they felt our action was flawed, which perhaps it was. Some thought we handled the matter about as well as we could. **Not one of them showed me definite instructions (a "pattern" dealing with such matters, except for the "sin" context of I Tim. 5:19 ff) from Scripture as to "how" it should be done.** Each one replied somewhat like this, "Well, I don't know exactly, but I think....," and from there varied opinions were given. Brethren, that is exactly the way we felt. We didn't know exactly what to do, but we did what we felt was best in order to salvage what we could from the "storm" that had passed through our midst. Please don't lose sight of "local congregational autonomy."

And yet, brother David Brown, wrote an article in "Contending For The Faith" (Oct., 2002), **which was very unfavorable toward Brown Trail.** I'm certain he does NOT know all the facts. He was NOT here when all our problems started in the School four years ago, neither was he here when they escalated and "spilled over" into the congregation, nor was he here when we took stringent measures to resolve the matter in June/July of 2002. Yet, he sits from afar, with pen in hand, and renders judgment against us. **Brethren everywhere, I ask you, is that right, or fair? I think not.** Yes, I suspect David "has heard" a bunch of half-truths, distortions, and slanted opinions from those who have become enemies of Brown Trail, because some brethren have spread malicious rumors "all over

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everywhere." But why didn't he at least show the courtesy of finding out the "rest of the story?" One thing he would have learned had he called me or one of the four present elders is that they and myself, while we tried to do the best we could in the exceedingly difficult circumstances we faced, have sincerely, humbly, and with heartfelt tears flowing, publicly confessed before God and our brethren here that no doubt we made mistakes and fell short of God's glory from time to time throughout the whole "mess." It would have been nigh unto impossible not to have in view of what we were subjected to day after day after day. For whatever human frailties of which we are guilty, we are exceedingly sorry, and have so stated before God and men, and have sought forgiveness. We all have been humbled through all this horrific experience, and we are sincerely penitent, regretting any and every wrong doing we may have committed. What more can we say than that? **But what does brother David Brown do? From afar he writes, "At present, the powers that be at Brown Trail are trying to say everything is A-OK. But I have not seen any sign of repentance from anybody for anything." How could he? He has NOT been here through any of this, and he does NOT know all the facts, and he certainly does NOT know our hearts! Best you should read Matt. 7:1-5, David. The facts are: at present, the four elders and myself have one desire...to put this whole nightmare behind us and press on in the Master's work. We are NOT trying to whitewash anything, or sweep sin under the rug, as we have been charged. We are just trying to do what Paul did (Phi. 3:13-14)...forget the past, having sought forgiveness for any mistakes made, and "press on." And that is exactly what we intend to do...to get busy again in "the Father's business."**

To the brotherhood, may I say a few things:

**#1---**Be it known that Brown Trail still stands for the same truth for which we have always stood. With deep conviction, we believe the truth, preach the truth, and stand for the truth of the New Testament. The School of Preaching here has some of the finest preachers in the brotherhood teaching in the School. For example, for the Quarter starting in January, the following men will be teaching in the Brown Trail School of Preaching: Robert Dodson, Avon Malone, Tom Gaumer, Eddie Parrish, Owen Cosgrove Perry B. Cotham, George Bailey, Charles Billingsley, Gerald Ball, Hardeman Nichols, and myself. A similar lineup is presently teaching. **There is no reason for the brotherhood to have anything but confidence in this School.** Others who have recently taught, or will soon be teaching again include Robert Waller, Ken Hope, Bob Stapleton, Furman Kearley, and Kenton Harvey. Others too, will be added as needed. Those are all faithful gospel preachers representing MANY YEARS of experience and great Bible knowledge. **Why would any Christian want to destroy this School that has been in continual operation since 1965? And yet some obviously do! Such is nothing less than reprehensible and tragic!**

**#2---**I make a plea to my brethren everywhere---please, let the "biting and devouring" of one another cease! Read Gal. 5:15! At very best, the number of us who believe with all our hearts that the Bible is God's word, and who do our best to preach the truth and stand for pure New Testament Christianity, are very few, relatively speaking...especially in view of some 6 billion people on earth today who KNOW NOT THE WAY OF THE LORD. Brethren, we need to be "pulling together" instead of tearing each other down! Yet, there is an element among us that spends much of its time "picking out flaws" of other brethren whether they be real or imagined. For lack of better terminology, I call them "the circle drawing mind-set." If you don't dot every "i" and cross every "t" like they think you should, then in their eyes you become "suspect" and they commence a campaign against you. While I believe the "liberal left" has done much harm to the Cause of Christ, I must say that the "circle drawing mind-set" has done just about as much harm on the other extreme. These brethren have really hurt the conservative stand for Biblical soundness by their splinterizing, knit-picking attitudes, breeding

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suspicion and dividing us yet further. In our case at Brown Trail, how comforting it would have been to have heard from brethren who said, "We've heard of the problems there and are so sorry about it, and our prayers are with you in this battle with Satan. If there is anything we can do to help, let us know."

**Thankfully, we got some calls and letters like that.** But sad to say, there have been more critics who have been condemning and unkind, almost as if they were happy about the pain we have been going through. Sad, sad. If brethren would spend their time praying for one another instead of spreading rumors, the Cause would be a lot better off!

**# 3---**I want to thank dear friends and fellow preachers of the gospel who have been so very understanding and supportive of me personally, and sympathetic toward Brown Trail for what we've been through. Three great gospel preachers in particular, have been such an encouragement to me in offering their understanding and moral support...brothers Wendell Winkler, Dan Jenkins and Frank Chesser. Thank God for Christian men like them! Also, on behalf of the elders, sincere thanks is expressed to each congregation and each individual who has helped and/or is helping us with the School of Preaching and "The Truth In Love" TV program. They want to assure brethren that Brown Trail is still worthy of your confidence and your continued support. That I believe with all my heart. Together with the supporters of these works, a great good is being done. Don't allow harping critics to convince you otherwise.

**#4---**I would like to close on a positive note. Though we lost approximately one hundred members, which is deeply regrettable, yet approximately three hundred and fifty chose to stay at Brown Trail. That should tell the brotherhood a lot. The ones that are here are very happy to be here and peace prevails again. Thank God!

**#5---** This is the final word from me on this matter. I've tried to concisely set forth in this "open letter" what happened at Brown Trail and why we did what we did. The whole "mess" has made me sick at heart because I know that Satan has caused the whole thing, including the division. At this point in time, I'm weary of it all and have chosen to "explain it" this one last time by this letter instead of over and again in phone calls or by personal letters. As far as I'm concerned, people can think/believe what they want to about it, as I'm convinced most will anyway. Hopefully, honest Christian hearts will be receptive to the contents of this letter and help us put to an end all the misinformation, rumors, and hurtful gossip that has been rampant. I know in my heart I've done the best I could through it all. Have I made mistakes? Surely so. Have I said and/or done things that probably I shouldn't have? Yes, I'm quite sure I have. Am I sorry for anything/everything wherein I was perhaps wrong? Yes indeed. Have I asked God's forgiveness? Most assuredly.

This letter was written in consultation with the elders of Brown Trail, and with their approval.

Most sincerely, and in Christian love, -Maxie B. Boren, gospel preacher

Brown Trail church of Christ

## **An Open letter to Maxie Boren**

A response to his [open letter](#).

In a open letter sent to many congregations, including the one where I worship and Don Simpson preaches, Maxie B. Boren makes some further accusations. He states that the purpose of the letter is to set forth the facts. I wish to elaborate on some of these "facts."

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Maxie, you start out your letter referring to rumors. This word, along with "gossip", has been used over and over to refer to anything that is against Dave Miller and his supporters. To them these words have no bearing on the factuality of the statements, just who is being talked about. Any statement, factual or not, said by these people are facts, not rumors nor gossip. These words are used to stop the spread of information. This is the root of the problem at Brown Trail from the beginning to the end (if there is such a thing).

Maxie, you claim that you and the remaining elders have taken the "high road." Please explain to me how secrecies, lies and misinformation are the high road. Please explain how the revealing of the truth is the "low road." As you say, there comes a time when so many untrue things have been said that an answer must be given, that is why there are so many that are speaking up. Your problem is the truth is being spoken and you don't like it.

Maxie, or should I say Flip Wilson, you blame Satan for what has been done and leave the impression that no person is responsible for what has going on. It is true that Satan has a hand in all of this, but so do people. There are many who have sins to answer for, including you. I don't think God will accept "The Devil made me do it?" Through out this open letter of yours you say you must have made mistakes, but you never admit to any sin. I get the impression that you don't know of any sins related to your actions or the others involved. Is the other side the only ones that can sin? So often the supporters of Dave Miller say that they don't believe that he could do the things he is accused of. The accusations are never answered, only ridiculed and answered with anger and lies. The requests for an outside audit have been met with anger from the remaining elders. My first letter, which pointed out the lies in Dave Miller's resignation was first said to be all lies. When I asked Phil to go over each point with me to show me how they were lies, he was too angry. (It was James French who was removed for being angry.) Later, in an elders meeting it was called my opinion. Nothing was said against any point of my letter, it was just condemned for being divisive. Truth is often divisive! It is because of the truth that Elijah preached that he was called the troubler of Israel (I Kings 18:17).

Maxie, you promote the rumors that you accuse others of spreading. Whenever a person does not explain what they are doing and why, they leave themselves open for speculation. The elders have continually refused to meet with other elderships to explain the situation. You have cut people off who have tried to ask you what is going on, even members of the congregation. The problem that you are facing is the result of not letting the facts be known. But if you did that, you would have a whole new set of problems. You would have to explain the defense of a man who slandered others and abused (mentally) students.

You are right, by this spring something had to be done, because one man continued to fight the eldership and stirred up others to his cause. Even in leaving Dave did more to divide the congregation than anyone else. (See Dave Miller's resignation.) Yet you say it is people like me, who made known what they know, who are the problem. Because you and the remaining elders refused to make known to the whole congregation what the real problems were, you had to do something underhanded like vote elders out.

You claim that some of the elders had disqualified themselves, yet the details were not given to the congregation, neither were the elders in question allowed to give an answer to the charges against them. Maxie, you told James French to sit down and he would be given time in the evening to address the congregation. Instead, the list of his sins, as briefly given as in your letter, was read and it was announced he was no longer recognized as an elder. The microphones were turned off so no one could hear any response from him. The reason that you considered him contentious was

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because he wanted to call sinners back to God.

The congregation was not asked to resolve the issues, but to make an uninformed decision on which elders to get rid of. This is a resolution akin to divorce. It is the getting rid of problems rather than solving the real issues. The congregation was never informed of the issues, except by the former elders, who were condemned in doing so.

Maxie, you try to justify the reevaluation of elders because some had become dis-qualified in your opinion. Yet you overlooked the objections raised against the new elders and ordained them anyway. These elders are the ones you support.

You talk about what the scriptures say and don't say. Why was not the sins of the elders presented before all and these "sinners" given a chance answer them? Accusation against Dave Miller could not be heard unless he was present to answer them, why not give this right to others? The answer to this seems to be that you and others do not want the truth to be known.

Maxie, you are constantly pointing out that these people are criticizing from afar. Sometimes that is the best point of view for a problem. Those who are having marital problems would like the decisions about the scripturalness of divorce to be decided by those who are emotionally involved in their problems. Is it not the elders who have children who are divorced that most often support divorce? Paul was often writing from afar when he addressed problems.

You state that there is a "lot more in the Bible about NOT bearing false witness, NOT judging falsely, NOT having a condemning spirit, etc ..." This is true, yet you continue to violate these passages. You have refused to expose these sins in those that you support.

Paul wrote in Romans 2:1 "Wherefore thou art without excuse, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest practice the same things." Maxie, does this apply to you? You condemn Marvin Weir as misrepresenting Brown Trail, but you in fact misrepresent what Marvin Weir has written. You condemn him for implying that Brown Trail is imbibing the 'change agent' movement. You fail to mention that when he mentions Brown Trail, he states "Unfortunately, this unscriptural process has been adopted by some who we would not number with them."

You accuse Marvin of making "it sound like every year or two we 'reaffirm/reevaluate' elders." You fail to point out that he states exactly when you have used this practice. To those who have read the article, there is no question but the reevaluation occurred just twice. It seems that you are the one who is misrepresenting the facts.

You state that four men, associated with the school, in 1990 had a part of the reevaluation. Don Simpson denies being asked to help, except to count the ballots. I have not talked to any of the other men you mentioned.

You talk about hindsight being 20/20. Please let us know what you think should have been done, now that you have had a chance to look back.

Maxie, you say that you and Dave Miller did not defend the reevaluation of the elders. Is that not what you are doing with this open letter of yours? This whole defense smacks of situational ethics. You state that you are not defending the practice, but since the situation demanded it, you did it. An

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act is either right or it is wrong. Have you not preached this?

You state that Dub Mowery's statement is ludicrous. Then you ask how can you stop a process that has already been implemented. Dub Mowery had made the statement that this should be stopped prior to the counting of the ballots. The answer is simple, if pride does not stand in the way. Simply stand up before the congregation and say it was a mistake and ask that the ballots be thrown away. It is pride that says we have committed to this path and we can't change.

In your letter you mention brother James French, although you do not name him. You name his sins as being contentious, self-willed, and soon angry. These sins you name are a result of his stand against sin. He refused to give in to the sinners. He was contentious like he was told to be in Jude 3. When faced with sin and those who stand for sin, should not a man be angry? All of these sins you lay at James French's feet belong at the feet of several of the remaining elders.

You state that David Brown does not know all of the facts. This is true, otherwise he wouldn't have bothered with the voting. There are so many other sins that are much greater that need to be exposed.

Maxie, I do not claim to know all that went on. You and the others have done your best to hide what has been going on. On the other hand, I was there in the congregation and more involved with these problems than most. I am not writing from afar, I was there.

You state that David Brown is not in a position to know if you and the elders repented. I have heard your "public confessions" which amount to little more than what you express in this letter. I have contact with many of those whom you and the remaining elders have falsely accused, and they have not received any apologies or requests for forgiveness.

You have repeatedly referred to this as an internal problem, implying that other congregations do not have any involvement with this problem, but they do. Brown Trail does not support the School of Preaching and the Truth In Love all by themselves. These are works that are supported by the brotherhood at large, and they should know about the problems relating to these works. This division started from within the school, as you stated, and not the congregation. These problems revolve around Dave Miller, who directed the school and the Truth In Love at one time. Dave Miller still preaches on the Truth In Love. The eldership (and apparently you) still defend Dave Miller. If congregations support these works, then they have a part in these problems.

A second reason why it is their business, is that they are brothers. We do not live isolated lives, else what business did you have preaching to me about my sin? If the sins at Brown Trail are not the business of others, then neither was my sin. That cuts down on a lot of sermon material.

A third reason why this is the brotherhood's business, is because the sinners involved are out in the brotherhood. They need to be known as sinners, so that individual congregations can decide if they want to be associated with them and their works. It is called marking a brother. I cannot make the brotherhood reject you, Brown Trail or Dave Miller. I can publicize what I know to be true and let others decide on their actions.

You state that the congregation is happier than it has been in months, yet there are people who are still leaving. The reports that I have heard indicate that people are not happy, but rather, look sad. If you wait long enough, you will be left with those that refuse to look at the facts and they will be

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ignorantly blissful. It is an unfortunate fact that you can find a following no matter what you teach or practice.

You condemn those who speak out, but you are quick to use those who are quiet as proof of your innocence.

You list men who are still involved with the school as proof that there is no problem. I have believed for several months that one reason that there are part-time teachers in the school is to keep the instructors ignorant of what is actually going on. I cannot answer for every man, but I know that Avon Malone expressed his opposition to the voting on elders. Why he stayed, I don't know. Perhaps he feels that he can do more good by staying and trying to teach the truth than leaving in protest. I don't know. Perhaps these men think, as you have been trying to tell us, that the problem is gone. Perhaps they feel (out of ignorance) that what went on was a congregational problem and they are dealing with the school. That was the attitude of at least some of 1990 instructors. I don't know. But I do know that staying is not a blanket endorsement of all that went on.

Maxie, you say that we should be "encouragers and NOT discouragers (see Philemon 7)." Are Christians to be encouragers of sinners in their sin? Many have encouraged you to repent of your sin, along with the remaining elders. How many people, through the years, could say the same thing to you? They want to be encouraged, even when they are doing wrong. Have you not discouraged the sinners?

You say that you have set forth what happened at Brown Trail. I am still waiting. All you have talked about is the reason why you voted on the elders. You didn't mention all of the members who did not fill out the ballots, but wrote that they thought the process was sinful and that the elders who supported it should resign. You didn't mention that the ballots were counted and destroyed. You didn't mention that the comments that the members made on the ballots were never seen by the elders, even though you asked for them. You didn't mention that some, if not all, of the remaining elders resigned. Did they reappoint themselves? Did you re-ordain them in private?

Maxie, you are wrong. We do not want to see Brown Trail, the school of preaching or Truth In Love destroyed. They were good works and I believe they can be again. We want you to go to heaven. We want you to repent of your sins. I know that you will think of this as act of hate, but it is an act of love for you and for the brotherhood.

Randy Cook  
former member of the Brown Trail church.

## RESPONSE TO OPEN LETTER OF MAXIE BOREN

By Marvin L. Weir

### INTRODUCTION

On November 20, 2002 the preacher of the Brown Trail church of Christ, **Maxie Boren**, sent an open letter to numerous congregations in response to alleged "rumors" being circulated about the congregation. Several pages of the letter are devoted to rebuking me and criticizing my article in the

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based on ‘what they had heard.’” The *American Heritage Dictionary* (hereafter, dictionary) defines a rumor as “unverified information of uncertain origin usually spread by word of mouth; hearsay The **only** thing that *TGJ* article under attack contains about Brown Trail is their utilization of an unscriptural elder “reaffirmation/reevaluation” process Brethren, how can what I charged Brown Trail with be rumor when Maxie in his letter admits that the process was used “in 1990” and in “June/July 2002” (pp. 3, 4).

### A ROSE BY ANOTHER NAME

Maxie may counter, as others have done, that they have not practiced elder “reaffirmation/reevaluation” because they do not call it that In a letter dated August 14, 2002 I asked the *BT* elders if it was true that they had just recently utilized the “reaffirmation/reevaluation” process **Eddy Parker** replied for the elders in a letter dated September 20, 2002 and stated, “But first of all, let us clarify one thing: at no time did WE ever refer to what we did as a ‘reaffirmation’ or ‘reevaluation of elders,’ or a vote.” On April 8, 1990 **Dave Miller** in advocating the “reaffirmation” process in his sermon, said, “We may use the term evaluation of elders, we may use the term reconfirmation, if those terms concern you, then call it something else...” (4-8-90 sermon at Brown Trail). Brethren, the old adage aptly depicts the attempted “cover-up” at Brown Trail – “A rose by any other name is still a rose.”

### LABELING FACTS AS “INSINUATIONS”

The first thing that the letter accuses me of being wrong about is “[insinuating] that Brown Trail has adopted the ‘reaffirming’ of elders process of the ‘change agents’” (p. 3, #1) One who reads the article in question will quickly note that I did not “insinuate” any such thing; I forthrightly stated the fact that Brown Trail has “repeatedly used the elder ‘reaffirmation/reevaluation’ practice” of the change agents Remember, Maxie has admitted that the “process” was used twice at Brown Trail Upon what basis, then, can Maxie say that my statement “suggests to the brotherhood that we are imbibing the ‘change agent’ movement, **which is absurd!**” No, Maxie, what is absurd is that you expect faithful brethren to play “make believe” that Brown Trail did not practice this “change agent” practice on two occasions Again, by your own admission, the brethren were asked “to express themselves” (the “reaffirmation” process as I’ll prove later) “in 1990” and “June/July of 2002.”

### ESTABLISHING WHERE THE “DARK CLOUD” ORIGINATED

Maxie’s public letter next accuses me of making “an ill-informed, absolutely false assertion: ‘Supporters have a right to know that they have repeatedly used the elder reaffirmation/reevaluation practice’ Dear brother Weir, that is just plain NOT true! You make it sound like every year or two we ‘reaffirm/reevaluate’ elders That is not the case at all Wherefore, I ask, what motivated you to make such a false charge? Why do you seek to cast a dark cloud over a faithful sister congregation” (p. 3, #2)?

First, I submit that I did not make a false accusation against Brown Trail as Maxie has alleged My accuser even admits in the next sentence of his letter that they have used this process “on two occasions, under extreme conditions in each case...” Maxie takes exception to the word “repeatedly” which the dictionary defines as meaning “more than once; again and again.” The

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“reaffirmation/reevaluation” process **was** used at Brown Trail “more than once,” and *TGJ* article in question will prove that I was not “implying” that they use this process “every year or two” as Maxie alleges. In the same paragraph of *TGJ* article where the word “repeatedly” was used, I noted that on April 8, 1990 Dave Miller advocated this process. Three sentences later I said, “However, it was recently repeated at Brown Trail, even though some of the Brown Trail elders objected to it.” Maxie, the truth is that nowhere in my article did I say or imply that Brown Trail was using the “reaffirmation/reevaluation” practice every year or two.

Neither did *TGJ* article state or imply that Brown Trail was a “change-agent” church. The article forthrightly stated, “The practice of “reaffirming” elders was begun several years ago by change agents. Unfortunately, this unscriptural process has been **adopted by some whom we would not number with them**” (emph. MLW).

Thus, I deny that I have done as Maxie accuses – something “unfair, uncalled for, and very wrong!” Neither is it I who have “cast a dark cloud over a faithful sister congregation.” Maxie, the “dark cloud” hovering over Brown Trail comes from within and not from without! It is a “cloud” that will continue to be observed by faithful brethren as long as “change agent tactics” such as the “reaffirmation” process are used by Brown Trail to remove existing elders who do not obtain a 75% approval rating from the congregation.

### THE “WOW” STATEMENT EXAMINED

The first full paragraph on page 4 of Maxie’s letter indicts me of maintaining a double standard. He says:

It is interesting to note this statement by brother Weir in the article he wrote under examination, on page 26 of *The Gospel Journal*, Oct., '02: “The same people that select one to serve as an elder because he is Scripturally qualified (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Tit. 1:5-11) can also reject that one because he no longer meets the Scriptural qualifications. Existing elders can and should reject a fellow elder who is no longer qualified to serve.” WOW! And AMEN! Why then, Marvin, do you condemn us for doing what you indicate we had the right to do? We did exactly what you approved in that statement. The majority of our elders approved and facilitated the action I had suggested, allowing the congregation to express itself.

Brethren, what Maxie fostered off on the congregation (he admits facilitating “the action”) is not even a 32<sup>nd</sup> cousin to my statement! I said that “the same people that select one to serve as an elder because he is Scripturally qualified (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Tit. 1:5-11) can also reject that one **because he no longer meets the Scriptural qualifications**” (emph. MLW). What is really **interesting** is that Maxie conveniently left out the two sentences that follow the above quote. I concluded that paragraph, saying, “The ‘reaffirmation’ process, however, is **not** based upon **Scriptural** objections. The ‘I feel that one is doing a bad or good job’ is totally subjective.” Maxie says that they “did exactly what [I] approved in that statement.” Thus let us continue our study to see if what **I said** and what **they did** are one and the same.

### A VALID OBJECTION VERSUS AN EXPRESSED SENTIMENT

The following are excerpts from the letter and forms sent by the elders to members at Brown Trail. All of the elders were not in agreement with this process and some did not sign the letter. All bold emphasis in the following quotes are mine:

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We WANT and NEED to know your **feelings** in regard to each one of us so each elder may consider your **sentiments** and determine whether he should continue to serve as one of your elders or not (emph. MLW in these quotes). Please pray about this matter, and fill out the attached evaluation sheet with your honest and **objective sentiments** as soon as possible, and sign it.

Each one of us has agreed to abide by the **sentiments** of the congregation as to whether he will continue to serve as an elder, or resign (some did not agree because they did not sign the letter, MLW). IMPORTANT – The elders will NOT see the returned “**sentiment**” sheets, so your **sentiments** and any comments you make **will NOT be seen by them** Only the tallied results will be given to them.

MY SINCERE AND HUMBLE **SENTIMENTS** CONCERNING THE SEVEN ELDERS OF THE BROWN TRAIL CHURCH OF CHRIST.

The following is a sample of the form to be checked for each elder:

[Please check the blank space that expresses your sentiments] \_\_\_\_\_: (1) In my considered judgment, I **think** \_\_\_\_\_ has done a good job serving as an elder and would like for him to continue to serve \_\_\_\_\_ (2) In my considered judgment, I **feel** it would be in the best interest of the congregation for \_\_\_\_\_ to resign as an elder \_\_\_\_\_ In brief fashion, the following is why I **feel** the way I do:

The dictionary defines “sentiment” as “a cast of mind; general mental disposition or an opinion about a specific matter, a view A thought, a view, or an attitude based on feeling or emotion instead of reason.” The word “opinion” is given as a synonym and it means “a belief or conclusion held with confidence but not substantiated by positive knowledge or proof.” Brethren, not one single time in the letter or the forms were the members at Brown Trail admonished to make sure they submitted **only** Scriptural objections to the men serving as elders! There is absolutely no Bible authority for a “sentiment sheet” being used for the purpose removing certain elders that **some** members **feel** should not be serving I still stand by the statement I made in *TGJ*. “**One** valid objection disqualifies a man from serving as an elder However, where is the Scripture or wisdom that necessitates that an elder who has been selected by the congregation and who meets the Holy Spirit’s qualifications can/must be periodically ‘reaffirmed?’”

### QUESTIONS TO ANSWER

If Scriptural objections are being voiced against certain elders, why would it require 26% of those objecting to disqualify the man from serving? Is not **one** Scriptural objection sufficient to disqualify one serving as an elder? Let me pose another question for consideration Can one who is Scripturally unqualified to serve as an elder continue to serve **if** he receives 75% of the member’s support? Brethren, the arbitrary percentages listed above do not come from the Bible, but from Maxie who takes the credit for suggesting this course of action to the elders so that the congregation could “express itself” (p. 4)

### A SCRIPTURAL REMEDY IS POSSIBLE

Maxie seeks to convince the brethren that there are no “explicit instructions given as to how to remedy a ‘problem of magnitude’ like Satan had managed to create at Brown Trail.” He says that they “do not subscribe to the concept of ‘once an elder always an elder,’” and neither do I An elder can disqualify himself One who no longer meets the qualifications of an elder should not continue to serve in that capacity What if one is guilty of sin and refuses to repent? The apostle Paul says, “Against an elder receive not an accusation, except at the mouth of two or three witnesses Them that

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sin refuses to repent, he must be marked and withdrawn from (Rom. 16:17-18; 2 Thess. 3:6)

If Scriptural objections are set forth against an elder, is the elder not entitled to see them? Is an elder entitled to face the one who has accused him of sin? Such was surely not the case as the “sentiment sheets” were distributed, tallied, destroyed, and the elders informed whether or not they had garnered enough votes to remain in office!

If elders cannot work together they may **all** choose to resign. The congregation can then seek out men to serve as qualified elders. It is a fact that just last summer at Brown Trail all but two of the elders resigned. I know that on July 14, 2002 (audio tape) that Maxie pleads with the congregation to “receive what he [Bobby Watts] has to say in a very positive manner, and I hope and pray you will respond positively to the requests that he makes.” Bobby then reminds the congregation that he and Phil Pope had recently resigned as elders. Then Bobby says, “We later were told that the remaining eldership [Guy Elliott and Eddie Parker] did not accept this, along with Maxie, and ask us to remain as elders here.” Brethren, by what Biblical principal were their resignations “refused” and then “rescinded”?

In seeking to be accurate about what occurred, let me add that Bobby Watts did ask those in the congregation who agreed to their “reinstatement” as elders to stand. I am told by those who were in attendance that a good number of brethren did indeed stand. The previous Wednesday, however, after certain information was made available to the congregation, those present were asked to stand if they thought **all** the elders should resign. It is then that Phil Pope says, “That’s a pretty good number.” Why mention these things? I believe they show that the “jury” was indeed tampered with throughout the entire process (as stated in Dan Flournoy’s article entitled “*The Necessity of Exposing Error*”). Those in attendance on Sunday, July 14 were not privileged to hear the information heard by those who were present on Wednesday, July 10. Unless there is a “secret agenda,” why not abide by the decision of those who stood on July 10? Keep in mind that four elders did resign at Brown Trail. Why not make a plea to the congregation in behalf of **all** the elders who resigned? Maxie and the existing elders **accept** two resignations, and then Maxie and the existing elders **reject** two resignations. Does this not suggest that certain men were wanted “out” of the eldership and certain men were wanted “in” the eldership?

As the saying goes, “the proof is in the pudding.” The entire eldership of seven elders was still intact when about thirty people including **only** four of the seven elders were invited to a **secret** meeting that was called by Dave Miller. When questioned about the meeting the four elders replied that they did not “act on anything discussed at the meeting.” But one who was in attendance at this meeting has now come forward and stated that the meeting was for the purpose of discussing how to remove the three elders who were not invited to the meeting. At least some if not all the elders who attended this meeting have now confirmed that this was the purpose of the meeting. Thus, the more one digs the clearer it becomes that the elder “reaffirmation/reevaluation” process and all that accompanied it was for the purpose of removing three of the elders from the eldership at Brown Trail.

Brethren, since when is “politicking” a Scriptural approach to appointing an elder or removing an elder?

MY “FRUIT”

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because they read my article in *TJG* He then says, "That is unfair, uncalled for, and very wrong! Do you think the Lord is pleased with your 'fruit' (John 15:8) in this, Marvin" (p. 3)? Maxie, I simply exposed and stated my opposition to the "fruit"(elder reaffirmation process) coming forth from Brown Trail The elder "reaffirmation/reevaluation" practice that is lacking in Bible authority was implemented and used at Brown Trail Is it wrong to be opposed to that for which there is no Bible authority? Evidently, the sister congregation believes the process that was employed in this matter to be wrong or they would not have ceased their support

There is no joy in writing this article or TGJ article of last October I have no animosity toward Maxie Boren, Dave Miller, the elders, or Brown Trail congregation Neither have I quickly reacted to what some will continue to call "hearsay" and "rumor." There is ample "proof" i.e., written, audio, and oral [witnesses]) for what I have stated One's first allegiance is to the Lord and His cause (Matt. 6:33) Thus, I continue to stand opposed to the unscriptural change agent tactic of "elder reaffirmation/reevaluation" (or whatever name they choose to call it) that was recently used a second time at Brown Trail My prayer is those guilty of wrong-doing will repent and make proper restitution so that the cause of Christ will not continue to be thwarted

Again, I say that the influence of the Brown Trail congregation is far reaching through the school of preaching and *The Truth In Love* television program Brethren who support the school have a right to know what is taught and practiced in the congregation, the TV program, and in the school of preaching They also have the right and responsibility to reject any teaching or practice that is unscriptural

#### CONCLUSION

This article would have never been written were it not for the "open letter" that Maxie sent to numerous congregations charging me with "false assertion[s]," "false charge[s]," and implying that I have "a condemning spirit" (p. 3) I will let the **facts** determine what the truth is in these matters.

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## **Brother Dub Mowery remarks to Maxie Boren's Open Letter**

...In the **OPEN LETTER FROM MAXIE B. BOREN GOSPEL PREACHER, BROWN TRAIL CHURCH OF CHRIST (November 20, 2002)** brother Boren denied that he and Dave upheld the reaffirmation/reevaluation of elders. He said, **“That is just plain NOT true! What we did defend was the right of a congregation to try to solve an extremely complex and difficult internal, in the light of Scriptures as best it can. There is a very BIG difference between Dub Mowery’s charge and the facts!”** Maxie further quotes me as follows: **“I pleaded with those two brethren to use their influence to stop that process at Brown Trial.”** Maxie then responded in his open letter, **“That statement is ludicrous. How can you stop a process that had already been implemented, and that brother Mowery knew had been implemented?”** There are two observations in which I would like to make about that statement. First, he admits that the congregation was using the process in which he denied that he and Dave had defended. Second, by implemented does he means that the process had already been completed or that it was in the process of being carried out? At the time that I met with the two of them, it was my impression that the reaffirmation/reevaluation procedure was still in progress....

--Dub Mowery

2003

## **CHANGE AGENTS AND LEADERSHIP**

**By Marvin L. Weir**

Change agents have made it their mission to restructure the Lord's church to suit their own whims and wishes. Most of these erstwhile brethren are well educated in worldly wisdom and use such wisdom in their attacks upon the body of Christ. To be successful in peddling false doctrine, change agents must undermine or negate the authority of godly elders. Thus, nothing is more crucial to the spiritual well being of the church than having faithful men overseeing the flock. If elders would take their Scriptural task seriously, it would end the liberalism and immorality that runs rampant in many congregations. However, “holding to the faithful word” (Tit. 1:9) is not appealing to all and is thus rejected by many so-called “elders” as not conducive to filling the building. What a shame and tragedy that many brethren are more concerned with physical numbers than with spiritual needs!

### **AUTHORITY OF ELDERS**

Qualifications for elders, found in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1, tell us that God intends for qualified men to serve congregations as overseers and shepherds. Many readily admit that the Bible authorizes elders but then quickly state that the only authority they possess is in being good

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examples to the flock. Most certainly, Peter forbids elders from “lording it over the charge allotted” to them and demands that elders be “ensamples to the flock” (1 Pet. 5:3). Every Christian is obligated to be a godly example (cf. Matt. 5:13–16). The question is, does 1 Peter 5:3 deny elders of the authority to make decisions in behalf of the congregation they serve? Absolutely not!

The Scriptures forbid elders to abuse their authority by using it for their own personal agendas. They are always to “rule” (Heb. 13:17) in the best spiritual interest of the congregation. An arrogant, dictatorial, power-hungry rule is **never** condoned or approved by God. The fact that some elders have abused authority delegated to them by the Scriptures does not make right the unscriptural position of the “**example only**” advocates.

One fallacy in this most crucial area is the idea brethren have that the decisions of the elders must concur with the thinking of the majority of the members. Such reasoning dispenses with the authority of elders and allows the congregation to vote on every matter to be settled. The elders who are to be the “overseers” now become the “overseen.” Thereby the door is opened wide for those who disdain the Bible pattern to recruit support for their ungodly agendas.

The Bible forever settles the authority issue regarding elders (cf. Psa. 119:89). First, the often overlooked verse preceding the one stating that elders are to be examples says: “Tend the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight, not of constraint, but willingly, according to the will of God; nor yet for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind” (1 Pet. 5:2).

**Second**, the writer of Hebrews affirms the authority of elders in commanding brethren to “remember them that have the rule over you” (13:7, KJV), “obey them that have the rule over you” (v. 17), and “salute them that have the rule over you” (v. 24). How can elders “rule” a congregation and not have authority to make decisions? According to *Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon*, the word *rule* quoted above in the three passages from Hebrews means “to rule, to command, [and] to have authority over.”

**Third**, an elder is accountable for ruling “well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity” (1 Tim. 3:4). Anyone admitting to truth knows that **authority** must be exercised if one is to rear children successfully! Either the parent or the child will be in control. This is precisely Paul’s point: “if a man knoweth not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God” (1 Tim. 3:5)?

**Fourth**, elders are to “tend the flock of God...exercising the oversight...” (1 Pet. 5:2). The word *tend*, according to *Thayer*, means “to feed...to keep sheep, to rule [and] to govern.” The ones “exercising the oversight” are called “overseers” in Acts 20:28. *Thayer* defines the word for “overseer” as “a man charged with the duty of seeing that things to be done by others are done rightly....” Will anyone be so bold as to argue that a godly example is all that is necessary to keep “grievous wolves” from devouring the flock? Will a mere Christian example keep men from speaking “perverse things” and drawing “away the disciples after them” (vv. 29–30)?

No, godly **elders** do not make laws, but they do boldly and conscientiously enforce **God’s** laws! Why? Because the mouths of false teachers must be stopped and the precious bride of Christ kept pure. The apostle Paul uses words that cannot be misunderstood in saying that an elder must be

...holding to the faithful word which is according to the teaching, that he may be able to exhort in the sound doctrine, and to convict the gainsayers. For there are many unruly men, vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the

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circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped; men who overthrow whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake (Tit. 1:9–11).

If elders can effectively tend the flock under their charge, having no authority, a shepherd might as well use wolves to guard his sheep. Believe it only if you are unwilling to accept the Word of God.

### **WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP**

The fruit of having elders with no authority is seen in the decision of more and more congregations to utilize women in leadership roles. Decisions made by the courts of our land declaring “discrimination” to be evil, oppressive, and unlawful have caused many to “rethink” their position of not allowing women to serve in leadership positions within the church. Most mainline denominations are now declaring that today’s culture demands the use of women in leadership roles within “the church,” and many who profess to be members of the church of Christ have decided to give full support to such apostasy.

It does not matter that the majority of our culture believes that a woman has the right to do everything that a man can do in the church. Since when do baby-boomers become the voice of God and the current culture the pattern for New Testament Christianity? What does matter is that which God has declared to be right. A faithful child of God has the obligation always to “speak the things which befit the sound doctrine” (Tit. 2:1).

**First**, women cannot rightly serve as preachers, elders, and adult Bible class teachers in a class composed of males and females because God has not given them the authority to do so. It matters not one bit whether it makes sense to the younger generation or if the majority of people believe it to be right. God’s Word is valid and binding even if the entire world argues that it is outdated and obsolete.

**Second**, women are to “...keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but let them be in subjection as also saith the law. And if they would learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home: for it is shameful for a women to speak in the church” (1 Cor. 14:34-35). In an attempt to make Bible commands look foolish, some declare that accepting this verse for what it says will forbid a woman to sing during the Lord’s Day assembly. A distinction must be made, however, between engaging in congregational singing (a command from God) and standing before the congregation in a leadership role (teaching, preaching, serving at the Lord’s table, etc.).

**Third**, God has given the position of leadership within the church to the man. The Scriptures affirm such in saying, “Let a woman learn in quietness with all subjection. But I permit not a woman to teach, nor to have dominion over a man, but to be in quietness” (1 Tim. 2:11–12). *Thayer* defines the word translated “to teach” as meaning “...to hold discourse with others in order to instruct them, deliver didactic discourses, to discharge the office of a teacher, to conduct oneself as a teacher...to impart instruction...or to explain or to expound a thing.” This definition leaves absolutely no wiggle room. A woman never has God’s permission to teach or “have dominion over a man” in religious matters.

It is also worth mentioning that when engaging in prayer (whether in worship at the building or at other gatherings) men are to lead the prayers when both males and females are present (cf. 1 Tim. 2:8). Chain prayers where both participate in the prayer are unscriptural even if they have the blessings of the elders (or of an elder’s wife). What is sorely needed is more respect for sacred matters

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### LEADERSHIP AND ELDER “REAFFIRMATION,” ETC.

The practice of "reaffirming" elders was begun several years ago by change agents. Unfortunately, this unscriptural process has been adopted by some whom we would not number with them. Brethren across the nation have long supported many good works overseen by the elders of the Brown Trail Congregation in Bedford, Texas. Supporters have a right to know that they have repeatedly used the elder "reaffirmation/reevaluation" practice. On April 8, 1990 Dave Miller preached a sermon at Brown Trail advocating this process. Paul Drum, an elder at the Rowlett, Texas, congregation, discussed with him the fallacy and dangers inherent in this practice. Paul understood that the "reaffirmation" process would be discontinued. However, it was recently repeated at Brown Trail, even though some of the Brown Trail elders objected to it.

Not only did existing elders voice objection, but others not members at Brown Trail who were concerned with the Truth, the School of Preaching, the television program, and the congregation pleaded with certain brethren to use their influence to stop a practice for which there is no Scriptural authority. I have permission to quote from one such person who met with brethren at Brown Trail for approximately two hours to ask questions and voice concerns. Dub Mowery, a gospel preacher from Drumright, Oklahoma, states:

I visited with Dave Miller and Maxie Boren in Maxie's office at the Brown Trail church building on Wednesday, July 17th. Both...defended the reaffirmation/reevaluation of elders. In fact, brother Boren acknowledged that he had initiated the process of the reaffirmation/reevaluation of elders for the four remaining elders during that period of time. I pleaded with those two brethren to use their influence to stop that process at Brown Trail. They both upheld that unscriptural practice. A night or two after that, I called Bobby Watts, one of the remaining four elders at Brown Trail, and pleaded with him to stop the process of the reaffirmation/reevaluation of elders. He simply stated, "I think that everything will be settled this Sunday night" (referring to a statement made to the congregation on July 21, 2002).

According to the "reaffirmation" guidelines, if an elder did not obtain a 75 percent or more approval from the congregation he would be removed from the eldership. The results were announced on July 10, 2002, and one elder was forced out of the eldership on July 14.

Something else to consider is that in the midst of this internal turmoil, two of the current elders resigned and soon thereafter rescinded their resignations. If words have meaning, and they do, elders who willingly resign are no longer elders. By what Biblical principle, then, does one "rescind" his resignation and remain an elder? Some Scriptural process must be followed when elders are first appointed to serve, but appointing oneself as an elder is not Scriptural.

Please consider these pertinent points: First, and most important, there is no Scriptural authority for the elder "reaffirmation" practice.

**Second**, there is a Scriptural pattern for confronting elders who are guilty of sin and refuse to repent. The apostle Paul says, "Against an elder receive not an accusation, except at the mouth of two or three witnesses. Them that sin reprove in the sight of all, that the rest also may be in fear" (1 Tim. 5:19–20). Anyone who sins and refuses to repent must be marked and withdrawn from (Rom. 16:17–18; 2 The. 3:6). The same people that select one to serve as an elder because he is Scripturally qualified (1 Tim. 3:1–7; Titus 1:5–11) can also reject that one because he no longer meets the Scriptural qualifications. Existing elders can and should reject a fellow elder who is no longer qualified to serve. The "reaffirmation" process, however, is **not** based upon **Scriptural** objections. The "I feel that one is doing a bad or good job" is totally subjective.

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**Third**, “reaffirmation” opens wide the door for those disenchanted with the Bible pattern to accomplish their liberal agendas. It is absurd to demand a “reaffirmation” of existing elders just because a congregation now has members who were not a part of the selection process. Members come and go but that does not disqualify one who was and still is qualified to serve as an elder. Who, unless he has a personal agenda, would want to keep a godly, qualified elder from serving? Elders who boldly uphold Bible Truth will make enemies. Family members will become upset because sin was not tolerated among their relatives. One can quickly lose his popularity when he stands steadfast and unmovable for the cause of Christ, but such does not mean he should step down from serving as an elder. To do so simply allows those who do not respect the Word of God and desire to restructure the Lord’s church to have their own way in regard to these matters.

**Fourth**, the influence of the Brown Trail School of Preaching is far reaching. How many students who graduate from the school will be determined to defend and implement the “reaffirmation” process in the congregation where they labor because of the influence and example of Brown Trail? This dangerous and unscriptural process does not need to infiltrate congregations, as did the Crossroads movement.

**Fifth**, when 75 percent approval is required to retain godly elders, only 26 percent of the congregation is in the driver’s seat. The folly of man in choosing such an arbitrary number to determine who is an effective leader should be obvious to any Bible student. What if the children of Israel had been allowed to practice the “reaffirmation” process with reference to Moses and Aaron (cf. Exo. 15:24; 16:2; 17:3; Num. 14:2; 16:41)? You know the answer— there would have been an immediate leadership change. **One** valid objection disqualifies a man from serving as an elder. However, where is the Scripture or wisdom that necessitates that an elder who has been selected by the congregation and who meets the Holy Spirit’s qualifications can/must be periodically “reaffirmed?”

### CONCLUSION

May brethren realize the tremendous need for godly elders who watch in behalf of souls “as they that shall give account” (Heb. 13:17). We salute elders who refuse to compromise with error and take the time necessary to oversee, feed, protect, and be godly examples to the flock that selected them to serve. A day of reckoning is coming for every child of God. Our prayer is that all who have strayed from a “thus saith the Lord” will repent and once again be content to walk in the light of His Divine Truth.

## DAVE MILLER

Holger W. Neubauer

Though Simon Peter was a key figure in the early church, taking the role of apostle, elder, and preacher, he found himself in a fellowship controversy with the apostle Paul that needed correcting. Consequently, Paul rebuked Peter publicly for his part in the dissimulation (Gal. 2:11-14). Paul followed his own inspired admonition in Ephesians 5:11 which said to “have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.” Paul had the courage to reprove Peter publicly because Peter’s sin was public and he would not work openly with Peter until Peter had repented. If those who are in position to do the same today did so, much of the hypocrisy concerning the fellowship issue facing the present church would be taken care of. Had Brother Dave Miller done as Paul did with Peter on the many occasions he has appeared with known false teachers, we would have no controversy with him.

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Dave Miller is the present Director of the Brown Trail School of Preaching which is located in Bedford, Texas. Brother Miller has had partnership with many liberal venues over the years. In 1995, Dave Miller worked with the International Bible College Lectureship. The same year's lectureship included Willie Franklin who earlier that same year was a Jubilee participant. Jay Lockhart participated on the 1995 IBC lectureship and believes that "God never required an individual to live a celibate life" and "God never required anyone to break up a marriage." Jay Lockhart participated with Joe Beam on the Red River encampment in New Mexico. Charles Hodge, who denies the authority of elders and called Max Lucado "the best religious writer in the world" was also on the 1995 IBC Lectureship. Brother Miller went back to IBC in 1996 and spoke with the false teacher David Lane, who believes those outside of Christ are not amenable to God's marriage laws. Gary Bradley spoke on the 1996 IBC Lectureship and was a participant in the 1993 Jubilee. Why did not Brother Miller protest publicly about these things? He certainly believes that men who teach false doctrine ought to be marked and avoided. In Brother Miller's book *Piloting the Strait*, a section dealing with false teachers says:

Rather than being duly noted and avoided (Rom. 6:17), they continue to operate freely and even function in influential capacities (e.g. staff writers for publishing companies and magazines). They are given latitude to voice their false ideas through major brotherhood publications. They continue to be used as guest speakers in pulpits and on lectureship platforms. We no longer call for repentance as John did (Matt. 3:7,8). (p. 505)

If Brother Miller had followed his own advice he would have called more than a dozen men to repentance before or while appearing on lectureship programs with them. Perhaps one of the greatest inconsistencies Brother Miller has been involved in is his appearance with Everett Ferguson on the 1997 IBC Lectureship. That very year Brother Miller reviewed Ferguson's book at the Spiritual Sword Lectureship in Memphis. Now, if brother Ferguson needed to be exposed in Memphis in October, why did he not expose him in September in Florence? Brother Miller had this to say about Ferguson's book, *The Church of Christ: A Biblical Ecclesiology for Today*:

Secondly, the book comes forth from an institutional environment that would seem to be an unlikely source for clear thinking about Bible teaching related to the church of Christ. We should be grateful for every university professor who remains true to the "old paths" even though surrounded by wholesale abandonment of Bible truth. No assumptions should be made about a person's faithfulness simply because he or she remains in such an environment. Nevertheless, the favorable allusion to academic colleagues (whose doctrinal soundness has been seriously questioned) in the Preface creates the impression that disagreement over doctrine as it relates to the church should not be allowed to disrupt fellowship.

This is an understatement. Brother Ferguson is professor emeritus at Abilene Christian University. Ferguson has participated with the so-called "Christian Scholar's Conference" at least five times; the last appearance was in 1996. 1996 was also the last time Ferguson appeared at the ACU Lectureship. How could Brother Ferguson possibly be obeying Ephesians 5:11 if he is a regular speaker at the programs where heretics most often frequent? Why does Brother Miller even bother to write up Ferguson if "no assumptions should be made about a person's faithfulness simply because he or she remains in such an environment"? Brother Miller criticizes brother Ferguson for those whom he chooses to commend his book. This criticism is just, but Brother Miller does not tell us that Ferguson is commended by Baptist W. R. Estep and the ACU Press. However, is not an implicit commendation made toward ACU and the Christian Scholar's Conference by Ferguson's not reproofing them? Brother Miller partners with Ferguson at IBC by working with him on that program and by not saying one thing about Ferguson. However, Brother Miller already prepared his manuscript for the *Spiritual Sword Lectures* in which he would rebuke Ferguson for those Ferguson recruited to commend his book. Is this not hypocritical? Brother Miller needs to learn that fellowship is not open-

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ended. If Ferguson was wrong for receiving recommendations from false teachers, then Miller was wrong himself for not reproving Ferguson of the same error when he participated with him at the liberal IBC lectureship.

Having perused Brother Ferguson's book myself, I find it significant that Miller said nothing about Ferguson's errant statement concerning baptism where Ferguson confuses water baptism and Holy Spirit baptism as one and the same. Ferguson on page 193 says, "To be dipped in the baptismal water is to be dipped in the Spirit." This is false doctrine. On page 403, Ferguson says, "Paul in I Corinthians 1:13-17 protests against any view of baptism which would make it a badge of distinction among Christians instead of a unifying act." Ferguson is involved in double-talk. Of course baptism is a "badge of distinction." Of course New Testament baptism separates the world from Christ and is also a source of controversy and division for those who will not obey the truth (Rom. 9:33; Matt. 15:12-13). Ferguson leaves the impression that the Holy Spirit still gives gifts today. Notice this quote on page 407: "There is one spirit, who unites all in baptism (I Cor. 12:13), gives gifts (I Cor. 12:4), and seeks to fill believers (Eph. 5:18)." No, Brother Ferguson, the Holy Spirit does not give those gifts today. Why did not brother Miller bring these and many more points of error to the light when his assignment was to review Ferguson's work at the Spiritual Sword Lectureship? Miller said too little about Ferguson in Memphis, and he failed to say anything about him in Florence when he participated on the same program with him. He should have at least said what he said in Memphis. The legs of the lame are not equal.

This material is presented with no ill will but only with the desire that all brethren will speak the same things in every venue they find themselves. If a man deserves public rebuke 100 miles away from his face, he also deserves it "face to face."

## **THE REAFFIRMATION OF ELDERS**

**GARY W. SUMMERS**

In the past few months the topic of "reaffirming elders" has come to the forefront, primarily because of the problems that the Brown Trail Church has experienced. This article does not seek to attack anyone there personally. Maxie Boren, who preaches and works with the Brown Trail Congregation (he also writes excellent articles in *Waymarks*, their church bulletin), has been both kind and friendly to me over the years I have lived in this area. Twice I have spoken on their lectures and occasionally taught a three-hour class to the preaching students. I also spoke at the last chapel service of this year's spring session. At that time tensions had been running high, but it was prior to the resignation of two of the elders. This article, however, is not about their internal problems per se (except as they reflect on the topic); commenting on those events would serve no useful purpose. Having been through a similar (though lesser) turmoil once, I know how emotional and intense these matters can be; it is always unfortunate when brethren begin treating each other as enemies and start doing battle against one another.

Certainly, no one should want to harm the influence of either the *Truth in Love* television show or the Brown Trail School of Preaching. But these programs do depend upon support from others, and those who contribute have a right to expect that they will continue to stand on a solid basis. The Brown Trail Congregation has now twice used what may be called a "reaffirmation" process. Maxie says they used it twelve years ago and have not repeated its use until this summer. While this information is, of course, true, there is an additional factor that those not from this area should know.

Many brethren criticized the practice the first time it was used. Brother Dub McClish documents some of these objections in his chapter, "Reevaluation/Reaffirmation of Elders?" in the 1997 Bellview lectureship book, *Leadership* (89-103). And for a number of years, many of us have been told, "They will never do it again." Some members of the Brown Trail Congregation were under this impression and have given others this assurance. Many people in this area agreed with this assessment. As recently as a year before the

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reaffirmation was repeated, one individual was allegedly told by one of the elders (who remains) that the practice would not be repeated. So, imagine everyone's surprise to hear that it had, in fact, occurred once more!

Now the practice is being defended, and many wonder what kind of detrimental effect this idea may have upon brethren. Before me are two documents: The first is my transcript of an Open Forum that occurred in Longview, Texas in August of this year. The second one is a nine-page "open letter," sent out by Maxie Boren, with the approval of the current eldership at Brown Trail. It is not our desire to accuse anyone of improper motives. The men taking this position publicly proclaim the Truth boldly in all other major areas. Our goal is to get them to reconsider this issue, or (failing that), at least try to persuade others concerning this doctrine.

### The Longview Forum

Following is the question posed to the panelists: "Is it Scriptural to have a reaffirmation of the serving elders? If it is Scriptural, shouldn't the reaffirmation use the same authority--outlined in Timothy and Titus--as when they were installed as elders, instead of popular vote? So, what about the reaffirmation of elders?"

Before we look at the answers to the question, we might point out that we do not know what the purpose of the questioner was. He (or she) may have had in mind what Brown Trail had recently done, or the inquirer may have been thinking about what some liberal congregations practice on a periodic basis (see pages 83-88 in *Leadership*). None of the answers drew any distinctions between these two possibilities.

Denny Petrillo: I'm going to answer yes to that question. I do believe that it is a process that the church can enact. It's not that there's a book, chapter, and verse that we can turn to because there's not--just like there's not as far as the installation of elders to begin with.

What is the basis for this rationale (in the second sentence)? Do we all agree that something should be done in a congregation in which an elder becomes disqualified? Yes. But how did the need to do *something* evolve into a *reaffirmation process*? What is being presented to brethren is the false dichotomy that *either* the church must have a reaffirmation process *or* we must allow disqualified men to remain in the eldership.

Those are not the only two choices; ironically, Petrillo mentions the Scriptural approach when he refers briefly to 1 Timothy 5. This passage sets forth God's plan for dealing with problems concerning an elder. The first two verses below supply the context, but the next two are the ones applicable to this issue.

Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in word and doctrine. For the Scripture says, "*You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain,*" and, "The laborer is worthy of his wages" (1 Tim. 5:17-18).

Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses. Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest may also fear (1 Tim. 5:19-20).

What wisdom shines forth in these two verses for dealing with a charge against an elder! The first step is to ascertain that there is a genuine problem--not just the gripes of a disgruntled, unspiritual member. If the elder is guilty, he should be publicly rebuked. Then what? Presumably, he repents. But what if he refuses to humble himself? Did not the Lord already deal with that possibility? He was not specifically talking about elders, but they would certainly be included.

"But if he will not hear you, take with you one or two more, that '*by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.*' And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector" (Matt. 18:16-17).

Where, in these Scriptural solutions, do we find a hint of the "reaffirmation process"? Petrillo argues:

Does the church have any kind of means at all in which to, as the body of Christ, address the problem of a man serving who is not qualified? And the reaffirmation process is one of those. It is still heavily

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Bible-based.... As a matter of fact, the congregation where I come from in Bear Valley recently did this. We did have a reaffirmation form based upon the qualifications of 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1.

How is "reaffirmation" Bible-based at all? And what is the authority for it--especially in light of God's inspired Word, which provides a different (and better) solution? The Bible provides no authority for "reaffirmation" every two years--or every twelve years! In fact, there is no authority to do so even once. Some brethren are beginning to equate the removal of an unqualified elder with reaffirmation, as though this unauthorized process were a viable option--as though 1 Timothy 5:19-20 and Matthew 18:16-17 were not part of "the faith," for which we are to contend.

Tom Gaumer agreed with these sentiments:

I thought a reaffirmation might come in handy where there's some elders who should have never been put in in the first place. I had that experience several years ago. I was preaching on weekends for a congregation in Ohio, while I taught at Ohio Valley College (that was my regular job). And they had two elders, and the two elders were obviously not qualified for several reasons....

Maybe if we had had some kind of reaffirmation, to get the congregation to do it, that they might have become aware of the fact that these two men were not qualified. I did try to talk to both of 'em and get them to step down, and they wouldn't do it....

Question: if these two men were ***obviously not qualified for several reasons***, why had the congregation not done something already? If the congregation was not concerned enough to take action on their own, how would a reaffirmation process have made any difference? As a preacher of the Gospel, why did Tom not present a study on the qualifications of elders, after which he could have publicly rebuked the men, as Timothy was instructed to do? It appears that there were two problems here: 1) unqualified elders, and 2) members who did not care. If they would not do the right thing, as per a Biblical commandment regarding those men, why substitute that which is not authorized in its place and expect better results?

Maxie Boren was also on this panel at Longview:

There are some things that are not addressed in the Bible in specific ways, and there are some things therefore left up to the realm of judgment as to how you handle a particular situation.

Brethren certainly agree; not everything is specified in the Scriptures. There is a certain amount of leeway in appointing or removing an elder. But God also gave us some specifics, such as the two passages already mentioned. Some of us cannot wedge the "reaffirmation process" into those two verses or figure out in what way they would even imply one.

Brother Boren provides an example of an elder disqualifying himself.

The bishop must be blameless; he must not be self-willed; he must not be soon angry, and etc. Well, what if a man, when he was selected as an elder, gave every appearance of not being a man of anger, not being a man that was contentious, and not being a man that was self-willed, but then after he was placed in the position of being an elder, he begins to manifest those characteristics. It seems to me that the passages that qualify a man to become an elder would also disqualify a man who does not live his life in keeping with those things.

We agree totally that something should be done, but such examples do not prove that the reaffirmation process is valid. First of all, his fellow elders ought to be concerned, along with the preacher and the members. Those who are in authority should publicly rebuke the man, if he refuses private exhortations. Such an action harmonizes with the Scriptures. Inventing a reaffirmation process (or borrowing it from liberals) does not fit the Divine plan at all.

Ironically, Maxie provides an example in which precisely the right action was taken in a certain congregation (albeit several years too late):

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Well, finally, finally, the brethren had enough of it. And they wrote down definite things that he had done that disqualified him, dating back twenty years. And they signed their names to it. "I saw him," for an example (I remember one of the charges), "hand out bottles of liquor to people in the minority community to get them to vote the way he wanted them to vote." And people signed their names to that. People heard him use God's name in vain in conversation numbers of times, and people signed their names to these charges. Well, you don't find anything in the New Testament about that. I don't find anywhere, anywhere in the New Testament where people dealt with a situation like that, but it was a bad situation. It needed to be corrected.

Yes, it did! And the course of action followed was in harmony with 1 Timothy 5:19-20. The evidence, which showed that he was not qualified to be an elder, was gathered against this man. This procedure lays the groundwork for rebuking him, which could not have been done without proper evidence. When the mouths of two or three witnesses have spoken, the man can then be rebuked and (if he refuses to repent) be removed from the office (work) which he has disgraced.

Gathering evidence in this manner, however, is an expedient; it is a legitimate means by which to fulfill God's command, which makes it authorized. In what possible way can a reaffirmation of all elders be considered an expedient in rebuking one who is guilty of sin?

Maxie continues his defense of reaffirmation:

But when you analyze it, why would it be unscriptural to allow people to express their sentiments in regard to whether a man is qualified or not. After all, when elders were selected, people in the congregation expressed their sentiments.... And then the eldership usually has a screening committee to take the ones that are most often mentioned and have the greatest support within the congregation, and those are the names that are generally put forward.

But where do you read anything in the Bible about all of that procedure? You don't, but good judgment tells you that's probably the best way to do it....

\*Send comments or questions concerning this article to . Please refer to this article as: "THE REAFFIRMATION OF ELDERS" (12/22/02)."

## **THE REAFFIRMATION OF ELDERS (PART 2)**

**GARY W. SUMMERS**

We all know that God gave the qualifications for elders but left the procedure for selecting them up to the judgment of men. Some congregations have exercised poor judgment in the means of obtaining elders, which is not God's fault. Every man seeking the work should be evaluated by the qualifications in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. All who are qualified should be appointed elders; those who are not should not be. Most congregations ask the members: "If you know of a Scriptural reason why any of these men should not be allowed to serve, please state your objection to the current elders" (or to some temporary committee if elders do not currently exist). Thus, there is a 100% approval if no damaging evidence against any of them is brought forth. All of these things fall under generic authority in the task of procuring elders. Exercising good judgment in this procedure in no way justifies the reaffirmation of elders. Brother Boren continues:

Now if the congregation was allowed to express themselves in that regard, let's just move on down the stream of time for ten years, and some of these men that were put in have proven themselves totally disqualified and are causing dissension within the body of Christ and about to divide the church, are we just going to sit by and do nothing? Or should we say to the congregation, "Examine your Scriptures, and see whether these men have remained qualified." If they've disqualified themselves, please express yourselves.

If there are men in the eldership who have *proven themselves totally disqualified and are causing dissension within the body of Christ*, then why not rebuke them before all? Gather the evidence, let the

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congregation know, and implore them to repent. If they do not, the church should withdraw fellowship from them. How does this problem remotely relate to the idea of reevaluating all the elders in the congregation and requiring a certain percentage of the popular vote in order to remain an elder?

The Nine-Page "Open Letter"

Recently Pearl Street and many other congregations received a nine-page letter responding to some of the criticism Brown Trail has received in handling their recent turmoil. Maxie Boren sent out a very well written letter, dated November 20th, explaining their rationale. Once again we want to deal with the issue, and in no way do we intend our comments to be a personal attack. Neither are we taking sides in their internal controversy; we shall only (for the most part) consider the material set forth in the letter.

Maxie lays the blame for these problems on Satan, and we could not agree with him more. We have all seen good works torn asunder; it is tragic to observe and painful to endure. Our prayer is that brethren can learn to disagree without forgetting that we have a Divine command to love one another, as Christ has loved us (John 13:34-35). If we allow adversarial relationships to develop in a congregation (or outside, for that matter), we are only issuing an invitation for Satan to triumph. The devil, however, never makes progress without men being willing accomplices. We have no accusations to make here; each person involved will have to determine how much, if any, he did the bidding of Satan.

After describing the heart-wrenching problem that had arisen and the failure of certain attempts to resolve the situation, brother Boren writes:

Finally, with no desire at all to "take sides," but only with a strong sense of urgency to solve the problem before absolute disaster came upon us, **as a last ditch effort to salvage what had become an "impossible situation,"** I proposed to a hopelessly divided (4/3) eldership that a carefully written letter be sent to the congregation giving members an opportunity to express themselves as to which of the elders had disqualified themselves in view of 1 Tim. 3:1ff and Titus 1:6ff. **The reasoning was this: if in fact the members of a local congregation are asked to express themselves in the selection process of elders, why not allow them to express themselves in an "impasse" situation like we had, on whether or not these men so appointed had disqualified themselves or not?**

This is precisely the place where the Scriptures were abandoned, and we want to raise clear and loud objections to this procedure. First of all, this unfortunate situation was not "hopelessly divided." A 3/3 split would have been hopeless. Four elders constituted a majority, as evidenced by the fact that the reevaluation letter was sent out on the basis of the decision of these four men. Maxie explains that none of the three (who have since left Brown Trail) signed it (although the wife of one did--with a reservation included).

Why did not the four gather sufficient evidence against the three and rebuke them before the congregation, as 1 Timothy 5:19-20 teaches? They were in the majority.

Second, what could a "reaffirmation" form hope to accomplish? If members were not aware of the division within the eldership, how could they determine who was not qualified? If they had no evidence of disqualification, how could they remove anyone? Should they receive their information through gossip passing among the members or from a public rebuke?

If, on the other hand, members were involved in the turmoil and had taken sides, how could ANY of the men expect to be reaffirmed? The two sides would cancel each other out. But if the members already knew who was the source of the problems, then once again, why not rebuke them publicly, as the Scriptures teach?

Third, what percentage of approval did an elder need to be retained, and what percentage was grounds for disqualification? Was it not 75% and 25% (the open letter does not say)? Who selected these numbers? Do not such arbitrary figures stretch the idea of expediency? If only a few members were aware of the problems, what would happen if all three now-Scripturally unqualified men (as this letter indicates--we are not taking sides) only received a 23% negative vote? Then, on the basis of a 77% majority, unqualified men, who should have been rebuked publicly, remain elders, and the turmoil continues.

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Conversely, what if two of the four solid elders only received a 74% favorable vote? The possibility is that if two good elders were not reaffirmed and only one disqualified one was eliminated, there would be a two-two tie and a genuine hopeless deadlock. What if the three disqualified elders did some major politicking and all got reaffirmed while two of the others fell by the wayside? (After all, if they are *that* unscrupulous, what would prevent them from lying?) Then these men who should have been rebuked now control the eldership and the congregation by a three to two margin. The possibility for such disasters could be avoided by following the Biblical pattern.

Fourth, are the members expressing their sentiments **informed** fully before making their evaluations? Or are they operating on the basis of hearsay and rumor? If they comprehend that three men have disqualified themselves, then there is no need of reaffirmation; the four qualified elders should publicly rebuke them and call on them to repent. If the congregation is being asked to evaluate on the basis of hearsay, how **informed** would such a decision be?

Fifth, if only 1% of the congregation knows a Scriptural reason why a man should not be an elder, then he should be rebuked and removed.

Sixth, when elders are appointed, does anyone use a 75% approval rating? How can a church follow someone when 25% of the members do not think he is qualified? For that reason most congregations ask for a Scriptural objection to be made known, and if none are forthcoming, the man is appointed (since there is 100% tacit approval). If the rationale for reaffirmation rests upon allowing the congregation to express their sentiments as they did when men were appointed, how can anything less than 100% approval be required this time around?

These six observations deserve a thoughtful reply and should not be dismissed with a mere wave of the hand. Only a few comments need be made on the remaining seven pages of the "open letter." Maxie writes:

**An elder can disqualify himself, just like a preacher can default and disqualify himself. When that occurs, such a "situation" must be handled. But how? The Bible does not specifically tell us how. We exercised our best collective judgment in dealing with our specific problem. The ones "from afar" who have taken pens in hand to criticize and condemn us COULD NOT POSSIBLY KNOW the "ins and outs" of our internal problem like we did.** And yet they from afar have sat in judgment as if they were eye witnesses to every action, conversation, and meeting that was held to try to resolve our problems. **There is a lot more in the Bible about NOT bearing false witness, NOT judging falsely, NOT having a condemning spirit, etc., than there is about HOW to solve a problem like we faced.** It might be well for our self-appointed critics to consider that fact.

We have no way of knowing the amount of or kinds of criticism Brown Trail has received, and certainly our intention here is not to "pile on." Maxie is right that few know the "ins and outs" of the situation. Hence, we have no desire to be critical or judgmental. Furthermore, we do not question anyone's motives in saying that they thought this was the best way to resolve their problems. As we stated previously, both Maxie and Brown Trail (to our knowledge) have usually taught and stood for the truth. And we surely pray that we will not be lumped in with self-appointed critics when we object to a practice that lacks Biblical authority and which invites a multitude of problems.

In fact, brother Boren writes that Brown Trail did follow 1 Timothy 5:19-20 with respect to one elder:

...he had disqualified himself in the light of two Scriptures...1 Tim. 3:3 and Titus 1:7...being contentious, self-willed, and soon angry, and had sinned by doing at least three of the seven things God hates, as listed in Prov. 6:16-19. Yet, he refused to resign although confronted with these facts. Thus, in keeping with 1 Tim. 5:19-21, he was reprovved, and removed as an elder.

We find no fault at all with this procedure, since it follows precisely what the Bible teaches (even though no specific formula is provided). In fact, we applaud its being handled this way. But why not do it in every

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case? Why rebuke one man publicly but then call for a reevaluation of all the elders in other circumstances? Would not consistency have served them better?

### Suggestions

First, my fervent prayer for Maxie and the remaining elders at Brown Trail is that they reconsider the reaffirmation process. Is it an expedient that falls under 1 Timothy 5:19-20, or is it a different approach altogether? Is it so hard to see that gathering evidence and rebuking a disqualified elder is not at all identical to a reevaluation of the elders? Furthermore, there is no need to have a periodic reaffirmation of the elders because **ANY** time members of the church have a viable charge against a bishop is *exactly* the right time to take care of the situation.

Reconsider the problems that are set in motion by using percentages and being satisfied with anything less than 100% (tacit) Scriptural approval. If, after a reevaluation of the process you were willing to use, you conclude that the procedure is not in harmony with the Scriptures, will you please write a statement to that effect so that brethren may know it? As mentioned previously, many of us thought you had already repudiated the practice. We would like to be sure this time whether you will continue to defend it or admit that it lacks Biblical authority. Many brethren think that a rejection of the reaffirmation process and an assurance that it will not be repeated would do much to restore your credibility and silence your critics.

Second, we call upon all brethren to think through this matter, disassociating it from the turmoil Brown Trail has experienced. The practice is not wrong because they chose to do it; neither is it correct. The reaffirmation process needs to be decided, as every practice does, on the sole basis of what the Scriptures teach. Other men are defending it (as demonstrated by the Longview Forum). Is it right and defensible or wrong and therefore dispensable? For many, this is a new topic, by virtue of its not having been an issue before. Now it is, and we need to determine its soundness before it spreads to other congregations.

Denny Petrillo said that reaffirmation was recently practiced where he lives, and now we have an open letter to brethren from Brown Trail defending the concept. Now is the time to examine carefully whether or not this idea is Scriptural and has merit or lacks Biblical authority and should be forsaken.

"Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil" (1 Thess. 5:21-22).

\*Send comments or questions concerning this article to . Please refer to this article as: "THE REAFFIRMATION OF ELDERS (PART 2)" (12/22/02)."

## **Dave Miller Fellowshiping Marked Liberal Congregation**

Brother Dave Miller has been marked as teaching error on MDR and reevaluation and reaffirmation of elders. His false teaching on these issues have been fully exposed in several publications including *The Gospel Journal*, *CFTF*, *The Defender* and a website called *Brown Trail Truth* at <http://www.brown-trail-truth.com/>. The evidence of his errors and participation in them is overwhelming. Since brother Miller has been marked as a false teacher he should repent before faithful brethren use him in their meetings and lectureships or appear with him on such programs. The Bible clearly teaches us how to deal with a false teacher (Romans 16:17-18; Eph. 5:11; 2 John 9-11). After reading the evidence provided by the brotherhood papers noted above and the website, one should be able to draw his own conclusions as to the error he holds.

Northside's concern with Dave Miller involves his violation of God's law on fellowship. Our dealings with brother Miller began in October 1999 when he conducted a meeting at the Calhoun Church of Christ in Calhoun, GA. The faithful had departed this congregation six months earlier (April 1999) because of doctrinal error, which was documented in our "Open Letter" and "Reasons Why We Left" journal.

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Prior to brother Miller's coming to Calhoun, some of our Northside members who had left the Calhoun congregation contacted brother Miller and provided him with a copy of our "Open Letter" which we had sent to the Calhoun elders on April 18, 1999. In this "Open Letter" we documented the doctrinal reasons why we left. We also sent brother Miller a copy of the audio tapes Jerry Dyer (a marked false teacher) had presented at the Calhoun Church of Christ in February 1999, in which he taught at least seven doctrinal errors that are documented in our "Open Letter". When the Calhoun eldership were asked if they agreed with what Jerry Dyer taught, they all stated before thirty men in a meeting on March 22, 1999, that they believed and supported what Jerry Dyer taught. We knew then it was time to withdraw ourselves from that apostate eldership.

Who is Jerry C. Dyer? Jerry Dyer came to Calhoun as a "Specialist" in "Conflict Resolution". He had earned his M.D.R. in "Alternate Dispute Resolution" from Pepperdine University School of Law in Malibu, California. In January 1999 he was appointed director of "Clayton Pepper Center for Church Growth Studies" at Ohio Valley College (University). Jerry Dyer's first of many visits to the Calhoun church was February 5-7, 1999, shortly after taking his new position at Ohio Valley College. Jerry is a modern day "change agent" who teaches and promotes "unity in diversity".

The Northside brethren had been gone six months when brother Miller came as scheduled to the Calhoun Church of Christ and conducted a Friday-Sunday night meeting. On the last night he praised the Calhoun elders for their soundness and good leadership. He also praised the Calhoun preacher as a good man and encouraged the congregation to "hang in there" with these good men. He went on to say that he knew they had just been through a tough time, but in time things would get better. The sad part to all brother Miller's praises and endorsements of these brethren was the fact that he had all of the evidence that this was a marked apostate church for some five months before coming to Calhoun and he bid them God's speed anyway.

As a result of brother Miller's comments two of the Northside members called Dave Miller and asked him why he endorsed this apostate congregation in light of the documents he had been provided showing their doctrinal errors. His response was, "I don't have time to read or listen to all the stuff I receive". His attitude toward them was short and as if he didn't care about our concerns. Needless to say, he closed the minds of the Calhoun members that had been concerned about the soundness of the Calhoun Church of Christ. After that night, all doors that had remained open to teach and explain the doctrinal errors that existed in this apostate congregation were closed.

Three weeks after Dave Miller left Calhoun, the apostate church paid the expenses to move Avon Malone to Brown Trail School of Preaching from Oklahoma Christian University. It would appear that money was part of the motive for Miller's holding this liberal apostate leadership up in high esteem.

Dave Miller was reminded of the Calhoun problem again in 2003. David B. Smith, minister of the Northside church of Christ, along with other preachers, refused to speak on a lectureship with brother Miller because of the controversy surrounding him. Brother Smith wrote brother Oscar Craft, director of the Palmetto Bible Lectureship, Greer S.C., which was scheduled for October 12-16, 2003, and told him about the situation here in Calhoun and provided him with information about brother Miller's false teaching. Upon receiving this information, brother Craft wrote a letter of cancellation to brother Miller and asked him to repent of his error and correct the situation he had created in Calhoun. As of August 30, 2005 we have not heard from brother Miller concerning this situation.

The participation with and endorsement of a known apostate church by brother Dave Miller is a violation of God's law on fellowship (2 John 9-11). This is yet another error brother Miller needs to repent of before he can be received by the faithful.

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Our prayer is that brother Miller will repent of all the error he has taught and of his participation with a known liberal congregation. We pray that he will repent and stop the division he is causing in the Lord's church. We hope he will live up to the man he presented himself to be in his book, *Piloting the Strait*. We pray that faithful brethren everywhere will uphold the marking that faithful brethren have placed on brother Dave Miller until he makes a public acknowledgment of repentance.

Elders, Northside church of Christ  
Calhoun, Georgia

Bobby Hall  
Ron Hall  
Terry York