

Northside church of Christ

Calhoun, Georgia

Special Announcement - November 30, 2005

"Open Letter" To our brethren at Northside and to all those who love Truth...

October 30, 2005 will be remembered as a tragic day in the history of the Lord's church in Whitfield and Gordon, County. On that particular day the elders of the Highland church of Christ in Dalton, Ga. executed their final action in marking and withdrawing fellowship from the elders of the Northside church of Christ in Calhoun, Georgia. The action is tragic because of the reason the withdrawal was implemented upon the Northside eldership. The withdrawal was the final result of the Northside elders voicing opposition, written and verbal, to the Highland elder's embracing of a marked false teacher, Dave Miller.

The current issue actually began with the decision of the Northside elders to rescind the invitation of brother Barry Gilreath, Jr., to speak on the "Forth Annual Lectures" at Northside. Once that decision was made, and due to the fact that conflicting reports, accusations of inconsistency and charges against the Northside elders of trying to destroy GBN began coming to the attention of the Northside elders, we decided the best way to face the charges fairly was to let the facts (correspondence between Highland and Northside) speak for themselves. For this action the Highland elders falsely accused the Northside elders, in a meeting on 10-4-05, of "grievous sins."

The great tragedy resulting from the action of the Highland elders will have far reaching consequences. Their action will further splinter an already fractured brotherhood, mainly because of their decision to embrace and promote a well documented false teacher, Dave Miller. Not only do they embrace Dave Miller, they now defend his false doctrine. Truly the words of the Lord are applicable to the Highland elders, "which strain at a gnat and swallow a camel" (Mat. 23:24). They bid God speed to the erring and attempt to mark/withdraw from faithful brethren who dare oppose them or disagree with their opinion on how to best deal with a conflict.

The following communication is in reference to the Highland elders "statement" which was read (by Barry Gilreath Sr.) in a meeting we had with them on October 4, 2005 and their "Open Letter" dated November 17, 2005 which was mailed to area congregations. October 2, 2005 brother Gilreath called one of the Northside elders and requested a meeting between the Northside elders and the Highland elders on October 4. After relaying this request to the other Northside elders we agreed to meet on said date with one request. We asked the Highland elders if we could record the meeting, but they declined our request. We had decided to meet with them anyway, hoping we could resolve some of the issues between us because of the AP/Miller controversy. Brother Gilreath began the meeting by reading a prepared statement from the Highland elders, after which we met for three hours. We respectfully disagreed with their charges and their demands that we repent of sin. At least five times during the course of our meeting, brother Gilreath, told us to repent of sin and of causing division. We told them, each time, that we not only respectfully disagreed with their charges, but they were the ones who had committed sin with their endorsement of AP/Miller and the divisive way they were handling this issue.

We were surprised they had made such a bold decision to withdraw fellowship so quickly, and without prior warning and time to discuss the issue further since this was our first and only face to face meeting with them. To mark and withdraw fellowship is a very serious matter with long term effects. Needless to say we were heart sick to hear of their unscriptural plan. After our meeting it was clear we were still as far apart as ever on all the issues. We had not changed our position on any of the decisions we had made. Our resolve was and is to stay the course. However, we decided to keep the Highland elders' "statement" confidential for a while, in order to allow time for emotions to settle down and to see if our three-hour meeting might have softened hearts any.

This communication also relates to the action of the Highland elders on October 30, 2005, in which they announced their withdrawal of fellowship from the Northside elders. And, on November 17, 2005, they wrote an "Open Letter" to area congregations announcing their marking and withdrawal. Our explanation (at the end of their correspondence below) of the Highland "statement" and "Open Letter" will serve as the statement of our position as it relates to their aforementioned unscriptural withdrawal of fellowship. Our prayer is that this material will serve to inform those who are sincerely concerned about the direction the Highland elders have taken and that it will be a platform for further discussion which, hopefully, will help Scripturally settle the current controversy.

We have no intentions of continuing this word battle with Highland nor do we plan to participate with them in any of their programs or activities until they make the necessary corrections.

Please feel free to use this information but only for the purpose of shedding light on this controversy. We pray that recipients of this material will be honest and wise in their use of this information. The issue before us is not a "game" and we do not want these documents to be used to promote "brotherhood politics" or "personal agendas". The controversy before us is very serious and should not be taken lightly. We believe souls are at stake.

Brethren we are engaged in a great spiritual battle. As elders of the Northside congregation we are prepared to "stand in the gap" and not allow error to penetrate the precious body of our Lord here. Our duty, as elders, is to hold fast to faithful words that we may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. The Bible teaches that "there are many 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." (Titus 1:9-11). "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 11:12-15)

We will not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shall we speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest judgment (Exodus 23:2).

The Northside Elders

The following "Statement" was read by Barry Gilreath, Sr., at the beginning of our October 4th, 2005, meeting:

October 04, 2005

We have asked the Northside elders to meet with us tonight for several reasons that will become apparent in the following paragraphs.

Let us first be clear that we do not begrudge your personal views regarding any of the questions that have been raised and addressed in recent times. Your views are exactly that to us....your views. You are certainly entitled to draw conclusions and make determinations as leaders of an autonomous congregation. Though we strongly disagree with your deductions, we defend your right to differ and your decision to not support our efforts to evangelize the lost. We have no ill will towards any congregation who elects not to participate for whatever reason. That includes Northside. Also, our comments tonight are not in any way directed towards, cast a reflection upon, nor should it be inferred that we are in any way at odds with brother David B. Smith or the good members at Northside [sic]. We understand that they know and act in accordance with the information you choose to provide them. The Northside congregation is composed of many faithful and truth loving people. David B. Smith is an outstanding Gospel preacher, for which we know that you are thankful. Having now addressed these preliminaries, let it be understood that our concerns and comments tonight are directed toward the Northside eldership alone. The following comments have no application to either brother Smith or the Northside membership. We are particularly commenting on the deeds and words of the Northside elders, specifically Terry York, Bobbie [sic] Hall, and Ron Hall.

We are very much aware that you have circulated three packets of information to numerous Christians over a period of weeks in an attempt to draw as many brethren [sic] into the issues of disagreement that have evolved. We have copies of all three packets. One of these packets provided the accusations brought against brother Miller and AP as dated 8/28/05. We understand that this information was circulated to the Northside members. You have also circulated a second package that included the private correspondences between the Highland elders and the Northside elders regarding questions you had raised to us surrounding brother Miller and AP. We know this distribution was at least in part at the hand of brother Ron Hall to various preachers and/or elders at a recent lectureship in Morganton that he attended. It is dated 8/8/05. You have also circulated a third packet containing these personal correspondences, as well as our private letters to and from the Northside elders dealing with your questions regarding the reception of funds. This packet was dated 8/15/2005. We know that the third packet of materials was prepared for the Northside members and was marked "Confidential Material" on page 41. We are also aware that you have received the Dave Miller letter in recent days setting forth his response to the accusations that the Northside elders and certain others have been parroting. The response by brother Miller contains some of the information that we had learned in our meeting with him, when we were trying to provide a fair and unbiased hearing of the facts in our investigation of the matter. We had presumptuously assumed that you too would have wanted to be aware of such before casting the wand of judgment. However, recent events have convinced us otherwise.

The Highland elders have scrupulously attempted to oversee the work of GBN and be faithful to the truth. Our decisions to accept or reject programs or persons have nothing to do with big programs or monetary support. They have everything to do with being fair and not allowing

"brotherhood politics" to enter therein. We have prepared a lengthy questionnaire that we require regular speakers of programs to answer before consenting to air program material. We have already rejected what seemingly was good programming because of the basis of answers given on the questionnaire. Any implication or charge of the Northside elders to others that our decisions are based upon compromise for big programs, money or friends is an insult and without any substantiation. Such talk only escalates emotions and produces further division. Any decisions we have or will make are only after prayerful consideration of the facts at hand.

Furthermore, we had sincerely hoped that you would have indeed kept your commitment to discuss this matter with brother Miller personally, as you indicated to us that you would do promptly in your last letter, even the very week of your lectureship. Since it is now obvious to us that this is not a priority of the Northside elders, and in light of the recent facts that have come to our attention, specifically that in your men's business meeting a couple of weeks prior to your lectureship, brother Hall affirmed numerous times that you already "have all the facts", and too that you (the Northside eldership) have "no respect" for brother Miller, it is clear to us and, we believe also, to fair minded brethren that you had indeed already pre-judged the matter, and were not truly interested in considering thoughtfully and with an open mind, what brother Miller had to say about these accusations. Though you may indeed after this meeting tonight, arrange such a meeting with brother Miller, we are now of the opinion that any such discussions between the Northside elders and brother Miller would only be symbolic at the very most, and would not be in [sic] conducted in the spirit of fairness, where truth seekers are seeking clarification and resolution. There is not one in this room tonight who would want to stand before such a judge knowing that he had already pre-determined your guilt? [sic] Not a one could have confidence in a process of such a group of partial jurists who make known in advance of any hearing that they have "no respect" for the one being tried, as you did of brother Miller. It is a shame that citizens of the United States of America would have greater respect for a fair and impartial hearing in our courts, that [sic] has been demonstrated by the Northside elders in this process. Even if you were correct in every accusation that you have brought forth, your biased actions and prejudicial words have brought no credibility to the process whatsoever, and in fact have only discredited it.

Additionally, the attempts to discredit, undermine and hurt those who have tried to be fair and impartial in this process are irreprehensible [sic]. The Northside eldership has played a starring [sic]role in this orchestration. Your escalation of activities has created a great rift in the fellowship that should exist at this time between our congregations. We have heard with our own ears, via tape, the Northside elders pounding upon the pulpit of self-righteousness, and we are disheartened that you have chosen to "look down" upon good brethren who have disagreed with your conclusions at this point in time. Are we to allow your assessments to be the standard used in overseeing these works?

Furthermore, your packets of information that you have been parading throughout the area have done a great disservice for the cause of peace and unity. A portion of your packets contained information that was privileged. Certainly you viewed it as such since the Northside elders asked permission via brother York to print one of our private correspondences for distribution. We denied the request, not wishing for our written discussions to be used for any personal agenda. Needless to say, we were amazed to learn that the Northside elders reproduced all private written discussions, with the obvious exception of a letter we wrote to you dated April 28th, 2005. For some reason, this letter was not included in your packet to your members. Our letter to you was dated ten days following yours. [sic] Its absence implies that there were no other correspondences between the Northside elders and the Highland

elders until the recent matter arose concerning AP. Of course this is not true, and unfortunately without its inclusion, you did not fairly and completely represent our concerns.

Though we are not aware of any laws that were broken in the distribution of our private correspondences, it was at the least unethical and absolutely a breach of trust. Since you asked permission to print one of these documents, you obviously understood such. We did not realize that we needed to copyright our written discussions with the elders at Northside to protect the sensitivity and privacy of our letters. This is precisely why we have elected not to have our discussion tonight recorded as requested by brother Hall. We have absolutely no confidence in the intents of the Northside elders, who have proven from past and present actions that there is an agenda at work of destroying the works of GBN and Preaching the Gospel. Any written discussions we have had with you were not done so that you might use such for strife and division. Yet that is what you have done. Likewise, our part in this meeting tonight is not to provide fuel for the flames of destruction. Our purpose from the outset of any discussions has been to address questions that have been raised by the Northside elders out of consideration for a congregation that we had considered our closest friend and ally in the North-Georgia area.

Brethren, we have been greatly disturbed, immensely disappointed, and severely hurt over the gossip, innuendoes, rumors, breach of trust, divisive actions and the such like that have roots within the Northside eldership. We had expected better of our friends. "*Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me (Psa. 41:9).*"

Proverbs chapter 6 teaches us that God hates the one who sows discord. This is exactly what has occurred through your actions and words in handling this matter. Though such tale bearing may make tantalizing reading and talk for those who thrive on such, we are confident that the Lord is very disappointed in you. You have allowed the Devil to take a situation that he could not convince brethren over the past 16 years that such rose to a level of division, and within a few months you have participated in the Devil's "tsunami" of destruction, designed to weaken the church and keep her from evangelizing the lost in an unprecedented means. Needless to say, we take his attack very serious, [sic] and will not be silent. Though you must have believed that your packets and campaign to discredit our efforts to save the lost via GBN and Preaching the Gospel would gain you some victory at our expense, you will sadly reap what you have sown.

The Bible says to mark those who cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine you have received. How ironic, that in your campaign to mark others, you have yourself become a victim of your own unbridled pursuits. You have sown discord, promoted gossip, and caused an unnecessary breach in the unity of God's people. The campaign that you are pursuing is neither righteous nor noble. Your words and actions betray you. We therefore, call upon the Northside elders, Ron Hall, Terry York, and Bobbie [sic] Hall, to repent, not of your views for they are yours. But we call upon you to repent of the misguided zeal, hurtful actions and words that have been contrary to healing and unity in the body of Christ. "*For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproach thee are fallen upon me (Psa. 69:9).*" We would ask that you consider our plea and make amends. This is our prayer. We have no desire to pre-publicize this letter, and will not do so unless the Northside elders choose to reproduce it for other parties. It will remain confidential for the present. However, if you rather resist such needed repentance, we will as the leadership of an autonomous congregation, make this letter public, along with the specific details justifying our charges, and sadly mark the eldership at Northside for your grievous sins.

The Highland Elders

On October 17, 2005, Terry York wrote the following e-mail to Barry Gilreath, Jr.:

Barry Jr.

Yesterday 10-16-05 Bill Rainy informed me that I had three E-mails from you. If you were puzzled as to why I did not respond, it is because I have never opened any of my mail from the church's E-mail address to me. My current E-mail address is tyyork@aol.com (this may be changing this week as I am debating whether or not I want to go to high speed). I could detect your frustration in your third E-mail to me so I just wanted to let you know why I didn't answer you.

But, as to Dave Miller's position on MDR, if ever there was a doubt as to what he believes and teaches he made it clear in his statement he sent abroad. I had heard from your dad and others that "the wife had been married before, she was now dead, he had not remarried." I did not know any of that! After learning all of that I was willing to look at the matter further, thinking maybe Miller had not taught error on MDR **(I am not closed minded as some of my good brethren have charged me, nor are my fellow elders at Northside). But if ever there was a doubt about what he believes and defends, he made it clear in his statement, repentance, attack on the talebearers, or whatever that was he has sent abroad. All of those circumstances do not change his position. If none of those circumstances existed he states clearly his convictions in number 2 under his statement on MDR and intent. Now I believe he holds error on the subject.

As to your cancellation on our lectureship, MDR was not the only problem. Miller is a well documented blatant false teacher on elder r/r, he divided the church at Brown Trail, he is a marked (disfellowshipped) brother, he continues to divide the brotherhood by such vague, deceptive statements as he sent out (I received mine about 9-26-05) and by his "good words and fair speeches" will continue to "deceive the hearts of the simple." I am convinced he serves his "own belly." So this is why we will not use anyone who fully, unreservedly endorses such an organization as AP over which Miller is the head.

Barry, have you listen [sic] to Dave Millers [sic] elder r/r sermon and read the material I sent to your dad? If so what do you think?

Thanks

Terry York

** Note: This sentence was changed for clarity. The original read; "(I am not closed minded as some of my good brethren have charged me, along with my fellow elders at Northside)."

On October 17, 2005, Barry Gilreath, Jr., replied to Terry York:

Terry,

Thanks for the reply. I have not reviewed the material you sent to my father. I have listened to the tape of Dave Miller, and reviewed the transcript you provided. I paid special attention to the highlighted portions of the transcript that the Northside elders had highlighted, and if that

were all there were to it, I could see how one might have questions. However, I contend you need to take the whole of the sermon, not just highlighted portions, to fairly represent brother Miller. The other statements he made prior to and before the sections you highlighted provide the full picture of his views. These statements are just as important and clarify his position; especially is such clarified in light of his recent statement.

Terry, others have reviewed the same material and some who had formerly had questions regarding brother Miller, have concluded that there is not sufficient evidence to make such adamant charges, and that even if such charges were true, they would not necessarily rise to the level of division within the Lord's church that has arisen among good brethren. And in all honesty, prior to the fallout at the Gospel Journal, brother Miller wasn't made an issue of fellowship among most good brethren. Brethren were not canceling brethren from lectureships and also canceling their appearances on other lectureships. That alone raises red flags with many good brethren.

I do not intend to speak for anyone, and you are welcome to verify this matter if you desire, but brother Wesley Simmons [sic] in a conference call between him and Barry Sr., and Jim Dearman said about a week ago, that he believed after carefully reviewing all of the evidence and in light of brother Miller's statement, that brethren were going to need to give brother Miller some slack on this matter. He was asked to repeat his statement to make sure they understood him correctly. He repeated it.

The only reason I mention him to you is because I know that you have a lot of confidence in brother Simmons [sic], as do I. The point is, if good brethren such as brother Simmons [sic], who have no reason to be biased, are now concluding that we need to give brother Miller some slack on this matter after they have looked at the "evidence", is it possible, Terry, that the elders at Northside might just be looking at brother Miller with an over critical eye? Could the fact that he spoke at Calhoun might have prejudiced minds in this matter? [sic] I am not accusing, but I am asking, because I do believe you are a fair-minded person. You certainly would agree that it is possible for one to become so passionate about something they perceive as a righteous cause, that their conclusions can be tainted. I know that has application to me, but it also has application to you, Ron, and Bobbie [sic] as well.

Terry, I do appreciate you writing me back. I understand about you not getting my emails. Those things happen. However, please understand that we (the Highland elders) do have "aught" against the Northside eldership. The lengthy meeting we had asked for about two weeks ago was for the purpose of going to our brethren privately to ask you brethren to repent of the discord, false innuendoes, and division that had come from the hand of the Northside elders. Our written statement we read at the beginning of the meeting outlined these matters.

We were not addressing in our statement any of your views regarding brother Miller. You have a right to those views, as strongly as we may disagree with them. However, we do have a problem with the manner in which the Northside elders have handled our discussions, and the unnecessary firestorm you created among your membership. Other brethren from other congregations who had received your packets were also concerned over the divisive actions of the Northside elders and brought this to our attention.

Because of the sin of sowing discord that you brethren engaged in, others under your influence have participated in such activities. There have been false statements regarding my views concerning marriage that have been made to our members via Northside, some of our members have been confronted in public places via Northside with the false accusation that

the Highland church was an unfaithful congregation. This past Sunday one of our deacons told us that he had visited one of our elderly members who had been contacted by a Northside member who told them they needed to leave Highland and go somewhere else, even to the South-Bypass congregation, anywhere but Highland. These are a few examples of the reason we believed it was necessary and right to ask the Northside elders to publicly repent of your participation in undermining the Highland church and elders. Even if you were correct in every fact concerning Dave Miller, I do not understand how that in light of what has occurred, you could continue to maintain that you have been above reproach in this matter.

Terry, I am asking you to consider this matter carefully. I do not believe that you personally intended for such to be the result of the actions of the Northside elders, but nevertheless this is what has occurred. When good intentioned people receive such information as your [sic] provided to your general membership, and then hear subtle accusations from those they respect regarding a congregation such as Highland, such division is bound to be the result.

We do not want to have to make any public statements regarding these matters. We have yet to have any meetings with the general membership, only the deacons. We do not want to publicize the written statement that we provided you. Nevertheless, unless the Northside elders repent of these divisive activities, we will have no choice. We (the Highland elders) can not sit back quietly and allow our leadership and influence to be undermined by such false statements, and divisive activities that are originating from our brethren down the road. It is not reasonable for brethren to expect us to continue to be quite [sic] in this matter while all along we are being targeted by others with false statements, accusations, and innuendoes.

Perhaps, with the public repentance of the Northside elders, some of your members who have been carried away with what they must believe is a righteous cause, will see that such activities are not in harmony with endeavoring to keep the unity of the faith in the bond of peace, and that it is never right to do the wrong thing, even when you are doing something for what you perceive is the right reason.

If we are required after this Tuesday to make these matters public to our members and others, we will be deeply saddened. I can assure you that I will shed tears when such is read in our assembly. Others will as well.

Terry, the ramifications of division among churches are long lived. They often outlive those who were involved in the initial activities. In light of this matter, please consider the importance of making this right.

Thanks again for your email.

Barry Gilreath, Jr.

October 30, 2005, this announcement was read by Skip McNutt (Highland elder) before the Highland congregation withdrawing fellowship from the Northside elders:

Open letter read to the Highland church of Christ October 30, 2005

Dear brethren,

From time to time, we as the shepherds of the Highland congregation must make difficult

decisions in order to meet our obligations to you and the Lord. Such is the case in this announcement tonight.

For well over a year, the Highland elders have had ongoing discussions initiated by the Northside elders in Calhoun. These brethren are Ron Hall, Terry York, and Bobbie Hall. We have at their request been involved in discussing various aspects of the works that the Highland elders oversee, specifically Preaching the Gospel and most recently GBN. We have prayerfully, patiently and thoughtfully considered their letters and comments, and have found them to be the promotion of nothing more than personal matters of judgment.

Yet sadly, these three brethren have determined to make matters of their opinion, matters of fellowship. They have also sought to undermine the Highland congregation through various means. You may or may not be aware of the fact that these three brethren have circulated a number of packets abroad to other congregations attempting to do this very thing. To our knowledge their attempts have had a reverse effect and they have in the process lost the respect of some area brethren because their efforts. We are also aware of Highland members who have been contacted by some under their influence who attempted to undermine the local church and stir up strife. In initiating and leading in such, we are convinced that brother Ron Hall, Bobbie Hall and Terry York have committed public sin and need to repent.

Having received such information of their activities from multiple sources, the Highland elders asked to meet with the Northside elders at their building a few weeks ago to express our concerns and to ask them to make amends through repentance. We had prepared a written statement that we read to them at the beginning of our meeting, outlining the areas of concern. We then discussed the matter with them for about three hours. We asked them several times to make amends in light of the strong warning in Proverbs 6. We asked them to consider our plea for a couple of weeks. Yet we let them know that if a penitent spirit was not manifested by these three brethren within that time period, we would sadly feel an obligation to mark the Northside elders as sowers of discord in accordance with Romans 16:17. A phone call and an email exchange urging them to repent followed the next week.

Tonight, we must sadly report that there has been no repentance made known by these brethren. Therefore, we are left with no other alternative than to do what the scriptures teach and mark these three men for their divisive activities. It is our sincere prayer that in time they will recognize their wrongdoing and make amends for the seeds of division that they have sown.

We do not believe that these three men are bad men. Quite the contrary, we believe that they are good men, yet men with misguided zeal, who have stumbled to sin and allowed Satan to use them to hurt the Lord's church and her efforts to evangelize the lost. We know that you will join with us in your personal prayers in praying for the restoration of these three brethren.

Anytime that an announcement must be made like unto this one tonight, our hearts are grieved. Yet we appreciate the continued support that you good people have and continue to provide us. Though difficult decisions must be made at times, and we are willing to make those decisions, it is encouraging to know that we serve a congregation of people who steadfastly support us in our efforts to do those things that right in the sight of God.

If you have any further questions regarding this or any other matter, the elders are always available to meet with you. Furthermore, a copy of our written statement given to the Northside elders during our meeting is now available in the foyer should you desire to have such.

The Highland elders.

On November 17, 2005 the Highland elders mailed this “Open Letter” to area congregations officially marking and withdrawing fellowship from the Northside elders:

November 17, 2005

Dear brethren,

We regret to inform you that on October 30th, 2005 circumstances required that we publicly marked and withdrew fellowship from three brethren in our area for divisive activities. These erring brethren are Ron Hall, Bobbie Hall, and Terry York. They are the current elders of the Northside church of Christ in Calhoun, Georgia.

Though we in the past have supported, respected and appreciated these men, in recent months events have transpired that has caused unnecessary strife and division through their leadership within the body of Christ in our area.

These brethren have aligned themselves with a small but vocal group within the church that is determined to divide the body of Christ over what the vast majority of sound brethren have determined are matters of judgment. The mindset that has spun such division is no better illustrated than by one of the Northside elders himself, Ron Hall, who has circulated an email that he originally wrote to a preacher in East Tennessee. It is dated 9/26/05.

Your October article for CFTF is excellent. We are in a minority when it comes to standing against the "change agents". The "big name" preachers and big brotherhood projects will no longer go against their supporters who are welcoming all the "change agents". It seems they are polling the brotherhood for whom they can support and associate with and then label those faithful who refuse to go along with them as a "**few who are in a small, but no less toxic, loyalty circle...a small negative faction**". Kent I commend your article and pray that the faithful will not become discouraged with all the deserters. We have always known that a spilt of some sort was inevitable. I/we just didn't know what it would look like. This may be the big one that we knew was coming. There has always been a remnant who would not bow to the change agents and compromisers. Sadly the lines of division are becoming clearer....

In just a few sentences brother Hall attacked the faithfulness and credibility of much of the faithful brotherhood in Christ. He refers to good brethren as "deserters" and "compromisers". He describes himself and a few others in glowing terms, and speaks of a split in the church that he affirms was "inevitable". Please note that he does not have in mind what is typically described as the liberal element within the church. He is describing good brethren like James Watkins, Curtis Cates, Jim Dearman, Winford Claibourne, Wayne Jackson, and many more brethren and congregations whom are sound in the faith. We have included for your information an endorsement letter for Apologetics Press that was signed by sixty faithful brethren that brother Hall was describing by his disturbing remarks. These brethren are

anything but deserters to the faith and compromisers.

For well over a year the Highland elders by request of the Northside elders in Calhoun had entered into *private discussions* regarding various topics of interest of the Northside elders. Of course we have come to learn since that time, that we were not the only congregation or eldership that these three brethren have attempted to correct over one matter or the next in the surrounding area. We are now aware of other area congregations, elderships, and preachers that they have also contacted to address other matters of their concern. Nevertheless, as far as Highland was concerned these brethren sought to persuade us regarding their opinions involving our oversight of Preaching the Gospel. Basically, these three brethren wanted to determine what congregations we as the overseeing eldership could or could not take support from for this evangelistic work. These brethren wanted us to conduct a religious survey of every contributor/congregation that would send funds to support Preaching the Gospel before any funds could be received. They also decided to scrutinize current contributors and informed us that there were a few churches that in their judgment were not faithful enough to contribute towards this evangelistic work. Of course we pointed out that there is a difference between an unfaithful church and a weak church and that we were not taking funds from any congregation that we knew to have been publicly marked and withdrawn from by the brethren in any local area. We also told them that as an autonomous congregation we, the overseeing eldership, would have to make any final decisions regarding these matters, if such were to arise. Furthermore, we kindly pointed out what we perceived as a great inconsistency on their part in their reasoning. The position these brethren took in our private correspondences, which they have now printed for public distribution, was that a member of the church whom they considered to be unfaithful could contribute a sum of money to the Northside church in the general collection and such was not a violation of fellowship. That same brother could contribute the same amount of money to a work of the Northside church such as to the work of the church library, and such was not a violation of fellowship. However, if that same person also contributed that same amount of money to Preaching the Gospel, then the Highland church violated laws of fellowship by receiving the funds. This was the illogical conclusion these brethren had to assume in order to persist with their criticism of Preaching the Gospel and the Highland church of Christ.

Shortly thereafter in April of 2005, we received another letter from them indicating that they no longer had any interest in continuing the discussions that they had initiated. We agreed and confirmed such with a follow-up letter to these brethren. Within this letter we asked them to address several specific questions related to these inconsistencies, should they choose to revisit this matter at any time in the future.

We had hoped that everything had been put to rest. However, within a few months, brother Bobby Hall, Terry York, and Ron Hall began to pursue yet another matter involving our oversight. It was at this time that these three brethren sought to exercise their judgments in matters pertaining to the new Gospel Broadcasting Network. This time the issue was of whom we should or shouldn't allow to speak on this network. Specifically, we were told that Apologetics Press couldn't be a part of this new effort because the Northside elders objected to the then interim director, Dave Miller. Once again, the Highland elders were faced with an all too familiar situation in which these same three brethren were seeking to impose their judgements on another evangelistic work we were entrusted to oversee, even though the Northside elders had made it clear in previous correspondences that they would not support either of these evangelistic efforts.

As we had previously done in the last series of discussions, we again agreed to discuss this

new matter with these brethren as a gesture of Christian courtesy. We considered their concerns and tried to be fair in evaluating the merits of such. Furthermore, one of our elders, Barry Gilreath, Sr. and brother Jim Dearman who is the director of Programming for GBN, traveled down to Montgomery, Alabama to speak to brother Dave Miller in person regarding the concerns that the Northside elders had raised to us. After the sit down meeting with brother Miller, brother Gilreath and Dearman reported back to the Highland eldership, and we were completely satisfied with brother Miller's response.

However, when it became apparent to Ron Hall, Bobby Hall and Terry York that we would not bend to their judgements in this matter as well, these brethren began to escalate division. They began a packet campaign designed to discredit the Highland church and the works of Preaching the Gospel and the Gospel Broadcasting Network. In part their packets contained the *confidential* letters that we had previously in good faith and out of courtesy written to them in regard to *their* questions. Please understand. They did not have the permission of the Highland elders to make a public spectacle of our written correspondences to them. In fact they had asked permission to reproduce one particular Letter, and we had told them that they did not have our permission to do such because we did not want our letters to be used for anyone's personal agenda. To our surprise, they published and circulated every written correspondence we have had with them over the past year or so in an effort to draw as many brethren into this matter as they could. This action on their part was absolutely unethical and a breech of trust that violated basic principles of Bible teaching (Matt. 7:12; Eph. 4:29; Prov 11:13). In addition to this action, some of our members began to receive calls and materials from some under their influence designed to stir strife and division within the Highland congregation. False accusations were made to Highland members regarding the doctrinal beliefs of the Highland preacher and elders. These brethren were told that we believed false doctrine regarding marriage and divorce and that we endorsed the change agent movement. We even know of a few Highland members who were contacted and encouraged to leave Highland and go elsewhere. This attack upon the Highland preacher, elders and the Highland church had its roots of origin within the Northside eldership. These brethren planted the seeds of division in the hearts of those who trusted in them, and they are responsible for the unnecessary wildfire that was the result.

We are thankful to God that these destructive efforts did not have the desired effect upon any of the Highland members, nor has such hurt Preaching the Gospel or GBN. Nevertheless, we took these activities very seriously, as you can certainly understand, and could not sit by silently and let a few brethren from one congregation attempt to undermine the local church we oversee and the great evangelistic efforts that that have been entrusted in our hands.

We therefore, asked to have a personal meeting with Ron Hall, Bobby Hall, and Terry York to yet try and handle this matter privately and discreetly. In our three hour meeting with them at their building, we laid out the evidence of division that they had participated in and called upon them to repent, not of their personal views regarding any matters that they had initially asked to discuss with us, but of their divisive activities resulting from such discussions that stirred the waters of strife unnecessarily. We told them that we had no desire to make any of these matters public to either Highland, Northside or anyone else, and asked that they soberly consider our personal plea. It was our hope that they would have a change of heart and apologize for orchestrating efforts that brought about nothing but gossip, false rumors, and unnecessary strife. Yet we also indicated that if they did not repent of this serious doctrinal matter within a given time, we would have no other choice than to warn other brethren of their divisive activities and sadly mark brother Ron Hall, Terry York, and Bobbie Hall as sowers of discord. Our meeting with these three men was to the point, but very cordial on both sides. We

then followed up with them the following week with a phone call and then an email exchange. Yet, sadly, there was no positive response to our plea for repentance. Therefore, we sadly fulfilled our commitment in this matter and announced a public withdrawal from these brethren to our members on October 30, 2005.

The Bible says that God hates the one who sows discord (Proverbs 6). The lord also has commanded us to mark those who cause offenses to the doctrine you have received and avoid them (Rom. 16:17). Christian doctrine involves a Christian's personal behavior and conduct. It is our hope that these brethren will repent of their public divisive conduct and behavior (1 Tim. 3:15). We have followed the Lord's instructions in this matter. Since a part of their activities included sending out packets to some area churches or leaders, we believed it necessary and appropriate to address their public sin in this public fashion. We have no idea as to all whom they sent such materials to or contacted via phone or email, but we have received nothing but support from those brethren in our area who have contacted us about this matter. We are appreciative of that support and thank you for your prayers and encouragement in the evangelistic efforts of Preaching the Gospel and the Gospel Broadcasting Network.

Shortly after we announced a withdrawal of fellowship from these brethren in our assembly, yet another packet was produced by the Northside elders that is designed to try and illegitimatize the scriptural action of withdrawal that we followed. We have reviewed the "new" packet and believe that fair-minded brethren will see it for what it truly is. The Northside elders are now beginning to circulate this material locally and abroad. We received word just yesterday that they hand delivered this "new" packet of material by one of their members to a preacher in Mississippi in recent days. Also, just this week we received yet another call from another one of our elderly widows who had received this same packet of information in the mail from Northside. These are only two examples of the many incidents that prompted this scriptural, needed, and just action taken towards these erring brethren.

We understand that the Northside elders have some strong opinions regarding the issues at hand to which we have given great consideration. We have also affirmed to them that we defend their right as the leadership of an autonomous congregation to make those judgements for those they oversee, even if we do not agree with their conclusions. Yet we pray that these three men will one day understand that the means by which they sought to impose their judgments upon the Highland church was harmful, unnecessary, contrary to unity, and resulted in nothing more than discord. We also hope they will soon repent so that their souls might be saved and reconciliation might take place. We have no ill will towards any of these three men. Please understand also that we do not believe that these three men are bad men, but quite the contrary good men who have stumbled to sin in a public fashion and have allowed misguided zeal to cause them to err.

We regret having to send this letter to you, but considering the very public activities of these three men, we believed such to be necessary. If you have any questions regarding this matter that you need to address to the Highland eldership, please feel free to contact us. We appreciate your consideration in this sad announcement and ask that you join us in remembering brother Ron Hall, Terry York, and Bobby Hall in your prayers, that through the observation of this divinely appointed practice, doors will be opened that will eventually bring them to repentance.

The Highland Elders

A brief review of and response to some of the issues raised in the Highland elders' "statement" (dated 10/04/05) and in Barry Gilreath, Jr.'s, e-mail to Terry York (dated 10/17/05) and their "Open Letter" to area congregations (dated 11/17/05) regarding Highland's unscriptural withdrawal of fellowship from the Northside elders enacted on October 30th, 2005.

On November 17, 2005 the elders of the Highland church of Christ in Dalton Ga., sent an announcement to several congregations stating that they had withdrawn fellowship from Ron Hall, Bobby Hall, and Terry York. We, the Northside elders, received our copy of the letter in the mail on November 19, 2005. After reading the statement we were heartsick because of the slander and misrepresentations that had been leveled against us by the Highland elders. Our families, members of Northside and preacher are heart broken at the actions of the Highland elders. In the next to the last paragraph of their letter of withdrawal they state, "Please understand also that we do not believe that these three men are bad men, but quite the contrary good men..." However, the disparaging remarks describing the Northside elders are not characteristic of good men.

The action of the Highland elders is unscriptural in that they attempt to withdraw from the Northside elders and yet remain in full fellowship with the Northside members and preacher. Is it possible to withdraw from the elders of the Northside congregation (only) while the Northside members and preacher submit, serve and uphold the actions of their elders? The Northside members and preacher do not honor the withdrawal enacted by the Highland elders. Neither do other faithful brethren, preachers and elders who know the facts behind their actions. We know of one brother, Wesley Simons, who pleaded with the Highland elders not to make such an impulsive move.

Another reason it is unscriptural is because the withdrawal (according to the Highland elders) were based upon matters of judgment. We contend that to expose error and uphold the Truth is not sowing discord nor being divisive as the Highland elders want you to believe. One brother said it this way, "**Sadly, some in the church would rather accommodate a little error for the sake of "peace" than to be true to God's Word if such loyalty causes contention. Yet, if one seeks to follow Christ, he must militantly defend the church of Christ, even if it does create strife and division. The strife thus created is God-pleasing**". (The Militant Christ by Barry Grider August 2001 THE GOSPEL JOURNAL, page 10ff.) Brethren, strife and division are caused by those who teach and practice error and by those who endorse such.

It may be the case that no amount of explanation will be sufficient to remove the shadow cast upon us by the words of the Highland elders. We will not attempt to answer every exaggeration and accusation made in their statement of withdrawal, just the obvious misrepresentations. Please allow us to briefly respond to the charges made against us by the Highland elders.

- (1) The Highland elders stated: "**Let us first be clear that we do not begrudge your personal views regarding any of the questions that have been raised and addressed in recent times. Your views are exactly that to us....your views.**" The Highland elders have characterized the doctrinal issues we raised in our letter exchanges regarding the "AP/Miller" controversy and "Giving and Receiving" as it pertains to Biblical fellowship as mere "personal views." They have taken serious doctrinal issues which they have now embraced and made

them matters of personal opinion. This should cause all faithful brethren great concern about the soundness of the Highland elders.

(2) The Highland elders stated: “***...our comments tonight are not in any way directed towards, cast a reflection upon, nor should it be inferred that we are in any way at odds with brother David B. Smith or the good members at Northside.***” This statement is nothing more than an attempt to divide the Northside congregation and preacher from their elders. Brother Gilreath, Sr., called Terry York on 10-5-05 and discussed further the issue of whether elder r/r was or was not an expediency. During that conversation brother Gilreath tried to persuade Terry to oppose what the Northside elders were doing, at which time Terry assured brother Gilreath that the Northside elders were united in their decision.

(3) The Highland elders stated: “***...we understand that they know and act in accordance with the information you choose to provide them.***” This statement implies that we only give our members partial information so they will see an issue as we think they should see it. We strongly reject that accusation. As elders we are to warn our members of impending spiritual dangers. As members of the Lord’s church we are to “prove all things and hold fast to that which is good” (1 Thess 5:21). We must have all the facts and evidence in order to come to the truth. We made information available to our members so they could study and know where to stand in this present controversy.

(4) The Highland elders stated: “***The Northside congregation is composed of many faithful and truth loving people.***” To that statement we wholeheartedly agree. We have the utmost confidence in the ability of our members to see the present actions by the Highland elders as unscriptural.

(5) The Highland elders expressed concern over the release of three packets of information we made available to those who were interested in the events/decisions that led up to our lectureship and the subsequent withdrawal of brother Barry Gilreath, Jr.’s invitation to speak. These packets were also made available to some who questioned our decisions (based on the AP/Miller issue) after they had spoken with Miller and had come away with the “opinion” that he was not guilty as charged. We believed the packets served to adequately and fairly answer these concerns. If anyone received one of these packets (by our hand) were offended we apologize. It was never our intent to warn brethren about the Highland/GBN controversy who did not want to be warned. The Highland elders are seeking to create a smoke screen here by charging us falsely with “sowing discord” and “causing division.” Warning good brethren about a false teacher and those who are endorsing such is not sowing discord or causing division among the faithful. Brethren we are commanded to oppose false doctrine and those who teach or uphold such. This is simply following scripture. It seems that when faithful elders, preachers, and others “stand in the gap” against those who are determined to destroy the Lord’s church, the faithful are made out to be the troublemakers. This is an old tactic used by those who refuse to follow God’s Word. We are reminded of Ahab’s charge to Elijah in 1 Kings 18:17-18: “*And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel? And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father’s house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim.*”

Before releasing these packets, several preachers had reported to us that brother Gilreath, Sr., and Dearman had approached them, accusing the Northside elders of sowing discord, causing division and trying to destroy GBN. Since these were false charges, and in order to accurately

answer them, we released all the “letter exchanges” we had with the Highland elders to prove that their charges were false. We let the evidence speak for itself.

(6) The Highland elders stated: **“You have also circulated a second package that included the private correspondences between the Highland elders and the Northside elders regarding questions you had raised to us surrounding brother Miller and AP.”** Again the Highland elders stated, **“A portion of your packets contained information that was privileged. Certainly you viewed it as such since the Northside elders asked permission via brother York to print one of our private correspondences for distribution. We denied the request, not wishing for our written discussions to be used for any personal agenda”**. Brethren, this is another smoke screen, attempting to discredit the Northside elders and to draw attention away from the real issue. The Highland elders have chosen to endorse Miller, in spite of the evidence that he is a marked false teacher. The letter in question (the first letter we received from the Highland elders responding to our concern about their endorsement of AP/Miller dated 8/10/05) indicated to us that the Highland elders had some concerns about brother Miller’s soundness. They stated, **“We are aware of the issues that have been raised and are planning a meeting to discuss such with him. There are some legitimate concerns, though we have heard that he no longer holds the positions he once held regarding MDR and elder affirmation. We do believe that if he no longer holds these views a public acknowledgment would be appropriate. We will be addressing this matter with him in the near future. We had planned to do such prior to your letter.”**

Although we felt the first Highland letter (8/10/05) was not an adequate answer as to why the Highland elders upheld brothers Gilreath, Sr., and Dearman for signing the AP endorsement, we did feel that it said enough to allow them an opportunity to finally look into the controversy surrounding Dave Miller. At this point we were not going to write a second letter.

In their letter (as quoted above) they said they had planned to meet with Miller about the issues surrounding him. We decided to ask Terry York to call brother Gilreath, Sr., on August 17 and ask if we and others who had marked Miller could meet with them and Miller when the meeting was setup. When Terry spoke with brother Gilreath about the meeting, brother Gilreath said that on Monday (8/15/05) he and Dearman had already met with Dave Miller, in Montgomery, about the issues surrounding him. They seemed quite satisfied with what he told them. According to Terry, brother Gilreath said Miller told them that not one of those who have written him up had ever met with him personally to discuss the claims. He encouraged Terry and the other Northside elders to call Miller, saying that he believed we would come away with a different view. This statement was the first indication that we needed to write our second letter to the Highland elders.

The second indication occurred when we asked Terry York to call brother Gilreath a second time to ask him if we could send their letter to others who might be concerned about their endorsement of AP/Miller. (We felt that if we could get their permission to show their letter to others we would not have to write a second letter.) When Terry asked for permission brother Gilreath wanted to know what the letter said. Terry had a copy and read it to him. Brother Gilreath then said, “No”, he did not want their letter circulated but we could “tell” anyone who asked what they said. This was a cause of great concern for us and indicated some sort of compromise with Miller. Therefore the second letter was written.

(7) The Highland elders stated: **“Though we are not aware of any laws that were broken in the distribution of our private correspondences, it was at the least unethical and**

absolutely a breach of trust." After additional correspondence, it was clear that the Highland elders had made up their minds to endorse and fellowship Miller, regardless of the evidence. In order to fairly communicate this fact we decided this letter and the entire exchange must be made public so others might be able to make "righteous judgment" in this matter. Information dealing with doctrinal issues (letters, etc.) should never be classified as "personal," "privileged," or "private" when souls are at stake, and again, we believe they are. To charge us with being "unethical" and violating a "breach of trust" is another smoke screen to attempt to cover up the unscriptural position the Highland elders have taken in this issue.

(8) The Highland elders stated, "***...we were amazed to learn that the Northside elders reproduced all private written discussions, with the obvious exception of a letter we wrote to you dated April 28th, 2005. For some reason, this letter was not included in your packet to your members. Our letter to you was dated ten days following yours. Its absence implies that there were no other correspondences between the Northside elders and the Highland elders until the recent matter arose concerning AP. Of course this is not true, and unfortunately without its inclusion, you did not fairly and completely represent our concerns.***" We never received this correspondence.

During our meeting on October 4th, we requested the Highlands elders send us another "copy" so we could include it with this material. We wanted to be fair to the Highland elders and include all correspondence so those who wanted to investigate this controversy would have all the facts/evidence available to them and not have to rely on hearsay. However, the Highland elders said we were not fair and insinuated that we were deceptive since we had not included a letter dated April 28, 2005 in the packet of our letter exchange with them regarding "Giving & Receiving". Their making this an issue is nothing more than another smoke screen.

When we finally received a copy of their "missing letter" on November 19, 2005 (almost seven months later) we were troubled by what we read. We decided to ask brother York to call Barry Gilreath, Jr. to confirm if this letter was the one they claimed they had sent to us dated April 28, 2005. He unreservedly affirmed that was true. We were troubled and curious how they could have written and sent a letter dated April 29, 2005, and it make reference to events that took place on May 18, 2005, and May 22-26, 2005, approximately one month after they claimed to have written the "missing letter." (This letter is included in our response to their withdrawal below).

(9) The Highland elders stated: "***Brethren, we have been greatly disturbed, immensely disappointed, and severely hurt over the gossip, innuendoes, rumors, breach of trust, divisive actions and the such like that have roots within the Northside eldership.***" While we agree that the things mentioned above are wrong and do much harm to the Lord's church, we deny that we are guilty of such. We cannot respond to such accusations based on nothing more than hearsay from the Highland elders. We understand this is a very sensitive and emotional issue and that people will sometimes over-react, exaggerate, and take statements out of context. This has likely happened on both sides of this controversy. We believe everyone involved should be "slow to speak and swift to hear" at all times, but, some "talk" is going to take place. We are facing a very public controversy that affects many brethren and therefore some talk should be expected. Hopefully such talk will be constructive and bring about Scriptural change where needed. As mature Christians we should recognize that fact. For the Highland elders to make such hearsay charges the center of the present controversy/division, is just another smoke screen. We should not allow the "talk/gossip," "smoke screens," and "straw-men" rise to overshadow the real issue here: Dave Miller is a false teacher who has been marked and should be avoided (Rom 16:17-18), rather than

excused, embraced, and defended. AP has endorsed him in violation of 2 John 9-11. Now GBN and the Highland elders are in fellowship with this false teacher and the organization (AP) which has taken him in.

(10) On October 17, 2005 brother Gilreath, Jr., (one of the Highland elders), in an e-mail letter to Terry York, made the following statement: ***"I do not intend to speak for anyone, and you are welcome to verify this matter if you desire, but brother Wesley Simmons [sic] in a conference call between him and Barry Sr., and Jim Dearman said about a week ago, that he believed after carefully reviewing all of the evidence and in light of brother Miller's statement, that brethren were going to need to give brother Miller some slack on this matter. He was asked to repeat his statement to make sure they understood him correctly. He repeated it."*** We did not believe brother Simons was being accurately quoted, so on October 18 we called him and asked him about the statement attributed to him in Barry Gilreath, Jr.'s e-mail. Brother Wesley Simons confirmed to us that he never made the statement attributed to him by Barry, Gilreath Jr.'s. He did say (as Northside elders have said) that we should give some slack to those who are not aware of the AP/Miller controversy, not making this a fellowship issue (with them) until they have had some time to look at the evidence and the facts and then make a decision. As you can see there's quite a difference in the two statements.

(11) The Highland elders wrote in their October 4th statement: ***"Though you may indeed after this meeting tonight, arrange such a meeting with brother Miller, we are now of the opinion that any such discussions between the Northside elders and brother Miller would only be symbolic at the very most, and would not be conducted in the spirit of fairness, where truth seekers are seeking clarification and resolution."*** We had agreed to pursue some sort of meeting with Miller because the Highland elders had put so much emphasis on this approach as being the way we could get to the truth and clear up the Miller controversy. We had asked brother Simons to be a "neutral party" and represent us (Northside elders) in arranging a meeting with Miller because we believed that, whatever the outcome we would be charged with being "unfair" and "without pure motives" as stated by the Highland elders above. Twice we requested a meeting with Miller (through brother Simons), but he refused to meet with us. After receiving Dave Millers 9/23/05 statement we no longer see the benefit of perusing such a meeting. (Please see brothers McClish and Watson's review of the Miller statement to understand our decision at this time.)

Additionally, please note that we also invited the Highland elders to meet with some of those on the "other side" (from them) of the Miller issue. We were hoping this meeting would take place and this controversy could be resolved, but they declined our invitation.

(12) Barry Gilreath Jr., in his October 17 e-mail letter to Terry York, made the following statement: ***"...is it possible, Terry, that the elders at Northside might just be looking at brother Miller with an over critical eye? Could the fact that he spoke at Calhoun might have prejudiced minds in this matter?"*** On the Day of Judgment will brother Gilreath tell people who followed an apostate eldership and Dave Miller's endorsement of them that we (the Northside elders) were looking at the Miller/AP controversy with "over critical eyes"? If not before, many will then realize that those who have ignored all the evidence of brother Miller's errors and have encouraged them to do so (as the Highland elders are doing) were far too "under critical" of these matters. To imply that we have "prejudiced minds" against Miller is to deny the facts and the evidence we have clearly presented the Highland elders in this case.

Those who now support and endorse Miller do not want to accept the fact that there were at least three phone calls made to Miller and a packet of information (detailing Scriptural concerns), sent to him before he came to Calhoun for a meeting in 1999. After endorsing the liberal Calhoun church, he received two additional phone calls and at least two letters (to which he did not respond), voicing concern over his unscriptural actions. With his endorsement of Calhoun, Miller caused precious souls to be lost by encouraging them to stay in an apostate congregation.

Furthermore, to say that Miller was not the center of contention prior to the controversy that involves the major changes relating to *The Gospel Journal*, shows their denial of the real facts in this issue, also. Just because MANY “sound” brethren have appeared on lectureships with Miller (and continue to do so) does not make what he has done right. Numerous brethren wrote brother Bert Thompson when he hired Dave Miller in 2002, alerting him to brother Miller’s errors. Several of these brethren discontinued their financial support of AP at that point because of brother Miller. Our preacher, David B. Smith, refused to speak with Dave Miller back in October 2003 along with other preachers at the Palmetto lectures. We wrote our "Open Letter" in April 2004, addressing the controversy surrounding Dave Miller, to convey to others our concern we had with him. We gave this letter to those preachers who were scheduled to speak at Northside or who had spoken here already, and, had spoken (or were scheduled to speak) on lectureships elsewhere with Miller. David Brown and Dub McClish refused to speak on the Visalia, California, Lectures in May 2004 upon learning that Dave Miller was invited to speak. Brother Miller was subsequently “uninvited” which allowed both of those brethren to then accept the invitation. David Brown turned down a Spiritual Sword invitation in 2004 because Dave Miller was on the program. David told Gary McDade plainly his reasons and McDade went ahead with Miller then and has continued to use him.

(13) The Highland elders have charged us with being “inconsistent” in handling the affairs of the Northside church. We will be the first to admit that being consistent, particularly as it relates to Biblical fellowship, is difficult at times. It sometimes takes a great deal of patience (while examining the facts, all the evidence and talking to the individual[s] in question) to determine the right course of action. We cannot let those who contend that we are being “inconsistent” (because they don’t agree with our decisions in matters of judgment) hinder us from doing what is right when it becomes clear what we should do. God’s Word has much to say on the doctrine of fellowship. God would not have commanded something we could not practice.

(14) It was affirmed in their November 17, 2005 “open letter” that Ron Hall was slanderous toward certain faithful brethren. One of those brethren was James Watkins. However, brother Hall along with the other two elders signed our first correspondence with the Highland elders affirming, “*We believe "Preaching the Gospel" television program is a good and sound work within itself. James Watkins is a faithful and proven Gospel preacher who needs to be heard.*” It is such misrepresentations as this that caused us to release our correspondences we had with the Highland elders over past several months. What brother Hall expressed is what faithful brethren have been saying for years. Apostasy does not happen over night nor does it happen as a result of those who are “extreme” liberals among us. No, apostasy occurs over a long period of time when good brethren begin to wink at digression. When brethren remain silent and refuse to speak out against digression from among our ranks. When we stop contending for the faith and start compromising for peace and unity some sort of division will occur. The late Bill Jackson wrote the following article “Preparing for a Smaller Brotherhood” in the *Christian Worker* editorial; April 1990, page2.

"Before someone tries to rename me, let me state that "I am not Chicken Little, running around crying that THE SKY IS FALLING!" I do not believe that the sky is falling. I do know that many congregations are fallen, and more will fall; and I know many members of the church have done and are doing the same. Sadly, in spite of all the publicity given to the marks of apostasy in our time, some are still prone to chalk it up to "preacher excitability, and exaggeration." They state that after documentation of more than 160 congregations having had internal problems due to the Crossroads/Boston Movement errors. Some will still say, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace..... We do not see how any informed member can doubt it. There cannot be great apostasy and the church still be growing in number. There cannot be all the weakness associated with departures from the faith, and great spiritual or numerical strength at the same time. Having fallen from the "top ten," the church will fall further unless there is, very soon, a turnaround that we cannot now see. In fact, being "in the top ten," and proudly desiring to remain so, or to climb even higher, no doubt encouraged some to soften all stance in order to be more pleasing unto men, and to gain the numbers that will be so impressive that we'll remain high in denominational favor. After all, the denominational papers and magazines were the ones keeping the count, and some in our ranks wanted to keep these in a favorable mood toward us. But, didn't Jesus warn, "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you!" (Luke 6:26)?

We must then prepare for a smaller brotherhood. When the apostasy has run its course, that's what we'll have. But, it will be a more faithful brotherhood, loving God and loving truth, and still holding onto and preaching exactly what we believed and preached since Pentecost, 33 A.D".

Perry B. Cothan warned, *"The church is in danger of another digression . . . the future of the church is at the turning point,"* and he made a direct "prediction" of evil things to come. [Firm Foundation, 8/92, page 28].

There are many faithful brethren who realize that there is a departure from the Truth taking place today. The late brother Jackson and brother Cotham, and many others, realized this years ago and have tried to warn brethren. Sadly the Highland elders refuse to see the digression now taking place and are now contributing to this digression by upholding such false teachers as Dave Miller and those who now endorse him despite the evidence of his error.

(15) In the accusation that we have "attempted to correct" other congregations, elderships and preachers over matters of "doctrinal" concerns we deny. If they mean we have met and talked to good brethren about doctrinal concerns then we must confirm that we do love our brethren enough to warn them of known Spiritual dangers they may be facing. One of these instances included a meeting at the Adairsville church of Christ on November 6, 2003 with Jerrie Barber who has been marked for teaching "Unity in Diversity." Barry Gilreath Jr. (one of the new Highland elders) applauded our efforts of exposing this false teacher after listening to a tape of that meeting. There were other occasions of such instances that we expressed our concerns where brethren thanked us for doing so (Gal 6:1-2; Eph 5:11). And yes, some have not been so appreciative (Gal 4:16). But we will not turn a blind eye to error, even if it means that some will slander, mark and withdraw fellowship from us as the Highland elders have attempted to do.

(16) The information about our concern with Apologetics Press and Dave Miller in the Highland withdrawal letter is true. We, the Northside elders, expressed our concerns to the Highland

elders and they responded by saying, "*Please do not infer from the commendation letter of AP that any endorsement of brother Dave Miller is implied... We are aware of the issues that have been raised and are planning a meeting to discuss such with him. There are some legitimate concerns, though we have heard that he no longer holds the positions he once held regarding MDR and elder affirmation. We do believe that if he no longer holds these views a public acknowledgment would be appropriate...*" The Highland eldership now accepts and defends Dave Miller's position on marriage intent and elder reevaluation/reaffirmation.

(17) The (only) phone call to which the Highland elders referred on page four of their November 17, 2005 "Open Letter" took place on October 5, 2005. One day, not one week after our October 4 meeting. The phone call was to Terry York in which Barry Gilreath Sr debated the legitimacy of elder r/r. During this conversation Terry York asked Barry Gilreath, Sr. if they still intended to withdraw fellowship from the Northside elders and Barry Sr. said yes. The (only) email we received was a response from brother York's email to Barry Gilreath, Jr. (dated October 17, 2005) which is printed in this material above. The efforts to resolve this controversy by the Highland elders isn't as noble as they want you to believe.

(18) They also state that false accusations were made to the "Highland members" about the doctrinal beliefs of the Highland preacher and elders in relation to marriage and divorce and the change agent movement. One of the Highland members discussed this issue with one of the Northside elders at which time the Highland member was told that Barry Gilreath Jr., and Barry Gilreath Sr., believed the same thing that Dave Miller taught on "marriage intent." For a verification of what the Highland elders endorse on marriage intent and elder r/r, simply ask the Highland elders.

(19) We do not know how many congregations received this announcement of withdrawal. We asked brother York to called Barry Gilreath, Jr., who serves as one of the Highland elders, on November 28, 2005 to try and get a list of the congregations to which they had sent their announcement so we could respond to their charges. After Barry contacted "several" of the other elders he e-mailed brother York back and said they would not allow us to know to whom they had sent their "Open Letter."

(20) The Highland elders do not want to face the real issue here. **Dave Miller is a false teacher** who has been **Scripturally marked**, and faithful brethren must **withdraw** from him. That is the real issue. We pray that the Highland elders and others who have winked at, excused and endorsed brother Miller will repent of their blindness before it is eternally too late.

Brethren, as of November 30, 2005 we have been receiving responses from elders, preachers and individuals in our area and from other states concerning the immature and unscriptural actions of the Highland elders. We have yet to have one who is willing to honor the withdrawal. If Highland is true to their commitment they of necessity must also withdraw from everyone who refuses to honor what they refer to as a "just" and "godly" action. The Highland elders may find themselves a recipient of their own words which affirm "... before long you may find that you are the only ones in your circle, and the course you good brethren seem to be following, if consistently pursued, will eventually leave you alone in your own circle."

We hope this explanation has helped you see the real issue.

In His Service,

Elders,

Bobby Hall
Ron Hall
Terry York

PS: For a more detailed report of the events and facts leading up to this point you can request a copy of our 98 page pamphlet (which includes this packet) outlining the present controversy. You can e-mail us to request a copy at one of the addresses below.

Bobby Hall at bobhall186@comcast.net

Ron Hall at ronhalloffice@bellsouth.net

Terry York at TYYORK@aol.com

Please Note: The Highland elders informed us on October 4, 2005 that we failed to include a third letter (dated 04/28/05) as their final response in this exchange. The Highland elders made a big issue out of this letter because we did not include it in our packet of material dealing with our first letter exchange on "Giving & Receiving" as it relates to fellowship. The reason we did not include it was because we never received this letter. Although we requested a copy on October 4, 2005 (when the Highland elders brought this to our attention) we did not receive it until November 19, 2005.

The Northside elders are very troubled by this letter for the following reasons.

- 1. The highland elders were adamant about this letter being written on April 28. Please note the following quote taken from their October 4, 2005 statement:**
"Needless to say, we were amazed to learn that the Northside elders reproduced all private written discussions, with the obvious exception of a letter we wrote to you dated April 28th, 2005. For some reason, this letter was not included in your packet to your members. Our letter to you was dated ten days following yours." **The letter we finally received was a computer printout dated April 29, 2005.**
- 2. The content of their letter has statements made of events that were not known as of the date of their letter. Please note a quote from this letter: "In the May 18th, 2005 bulletin of the Bremen church of Christ, he is advertised as holding a gospel meeting at Vila Rica." There is a Bremen bulletin dated May 18, 2005 which was published three weeks after their April 29, 2005 letter. Another quote from same letter: "May we remind you that brother B.J. Clarke spoke in your meeting and he along with the Southaven church are involved in GBN." This meeting referred to was conducted on May 22-26, 2005 which means this would have been over four weeks after their April 29, 2005 letter was written.**
- 3. In our judgment the over all content of this letter does not fit the discussions going on in our first letter exchange dealing with "Giving & Receiving". The content is more in line with the dialogue which occurred during the AP/Miller exchange which took place in August and September 2005.**

Before we published this letter we wanted to verify with the Highland elders if they indeed wrote this letter on April 29, 2005. We asked one of our elders (Terry York) to call Barry Gilreath, Jr. on November 28th to confirm if April 29th was the actual date the missing letter was written and he said YES. We asked brother Gilreath, Jr. why they did not send us a copy of the original and he said they did not keep a copy. Again, Terry asked if they had changed/altered the letter in any way since the original date and brother Gilreath, Jr. said absolutely not. He said the only thing different from the original letter (which we never received) and the one we received on November 19th, 2005 was the signatures of the Highland elders were missing because they did not keep a copy of the original.

Brother Gilreath, Jr. then e-mailed Terry York, after their phone conversation, and made the following reference to the missing letter: "As far as the April letter you inquired about, I do not understand what you are trying to prove or insinuate by your questions. We provided you with the draft we had saved on our computer. You brethren are the only ones who would have the original hard copy, and for that matter the only copy, since we have not sent that particular letter to anyone other than to yourselves."

Please read the following "missing letter" and make your own judgment as to when this letter was written.

On 04/29/05 the Highland elders wrote their third and final response to the Northside elders regarding "Giving and Receiving" as it pertains to fellowship: This is the "missing letter" referred to above:

April 29, 2005

Dear brethren in Christ,

We have received and reviewed your most recent letter. We are in agreement with you in that we also have no interest in continuing to pursue this matter. It appears to us that there are firm positions held on both sides, and we do not know what good can come from continuing such discussions. We regret that such correspondence has hindered the good relationship we have enjoyed with Northside in the past. This will be our last response regarding this matter, unless it is deemed necessary to continue such at a later time. We would ask that you consider several matters we shall make note of in this letter. If you choose to answer this letter, we would ask that you address eight specific questions we will pose.

We believe that Highland has enjoyed a special relationship with the Northside congregation ever since the congregation was established a few years ago. To our knowledge we have supported every effort you have implemented prior to these discussions beginning, both in attendance and in advertising. We have even dedicated large portions of our bulletin at times to promote your good works, more so than *any* other congregation. We have promoted the Northside congregation *consistently* from the pulpit and have used the evangelists at Northside for various functions on numerous occasions. As an eldership, we have never said one disparaging word to our members regarding this or any other matter. We desire for that relationship to continue, yet the persistent inferences of unfaithfulness directed toward us regarding this matter of judgment, and the visible lack of support that you have determined not to provide to these great works are certainly counterproductive in such. Certainly your members will inquire, if they have not already done so, as to why you will no longer support

Preaching the Gospel and perhaps why Northside will not support GBN that is overwhelmingly being supported by faithful brethren. Such discussion can't help but to have an effect upon the relationship of our congregations. We are saddened by your decision to allow a judgment matter to be a test of faithfulness. No, we do not believe that fellowship is a matter of judgment, but we do believe that you have made an issue a matter of fellowship incorrectly.

Good brethren have always had differences of opinion regarding some matters, and yet they have resisted the urge to divide over such things that are hypothetical or perhaps even rare at best. For example, can a Christian go to war? We certainly have our own views regarding this matter, but we hardly see that this should become an issue that should divide faithful congregations. We believe you would agree. And what of the issue that was discussed at White Oak several months ago. Should such a rare or even hypothetical issue be the source for division among area congregations?

We see no difference in the issue at hand than in the one discussed at White Oak or the question of the Christian and war. It is a hypothetical issue at best, since there are *no supporting congregations* to our knowledge that have been withdrawn from, and if an unfaithful brother or brethren where to send support, it would probably be a rare instance, since the very purpose of GBN is to provide "sound preaching and teaching 24 hours a day, and seven days a week." Such a contribution would be self-defeating, since the speakers for GBN and the programming will provide a *constant supply of the truth and only the truth*.

There also seems to be persistent doubt regarding another matter of our discussion. We will affirm once again that it is not our desire to knowingly solicit the liberal element of the church. There have been several instances that have come up in recent times where we have taken steps to insure such. For example, many months ago, the Christian Chronicle wrote us and asked us to provide information so that they could do a large write up on our effort. Certainly this would have provided a lot of exposure for this work. We discussed the matter and determined that we would not provide the information since many who read and support their publication are of the liberal persuasion, and that is not the element within the church we were trying to appeal to. Any information they have received, published, or will publish is completely independent of the Highland eldership. Also, when we mailed our DVD out, we tried to eliminate congregations that we knew to be apostate. These are only two examples of many in which the Highland elders have sought to have the highest standards in our efforts. Your allegation that the Calhoun congregation has been solicited has no substance whatsoever to any fair-minded person. (1) Do you mean to suggest that just because an unfaithful member of the church happened to be seated during a general assembly at the Freed-Hardeman Lectures, unbeknown to us, that an invitation to fellowship was extended to the unfaithful? Surely you would not apply that same reasoning to your own assembly. This has been part of the problem as we see it. There have been two standards used in these discussions - one for Northside and one for Highland. (2) If Northside has no control over who happens to be in your own assembly of 100+ when financial matters or mission works are discussed in announcements, sermons, or when a visiting missionary addresses the assembly, why would you expect Highland to have such control over who happens to be in an assembly of 1000+ at the Freed-Hardeman Lectures when the DVD is played? The standard you are judging us by is not fair, nor do we believe that you would consistently apply such reasoning to your own assembly. If you have taken time to review the DVD, you will surely note that soundness and distinctiveness is emphasized from beginning to end. We would wonder why any unfaithful congregation would even want to be supportive of a work that will include faithful brethren such as Winfred Claiborne, B.J. Clarke, James Watkins, Tom Holland, Gary McDade, John Shannon and others of their caliber. Nevertheless, if an unfaithful brother happens to be in an

assembly of the faithful, and he makes the *assumption* that he is sound, that is not our fault, no more than it would be your fault, if such occurred at Northside on any given week. Despite your claim in your previous letter, we continue to affirm in the strongest way that *we do not solicit the support of liberal brethren*. We don't know how much plainer we can make this. Either you believe our affirmation or you do not. If you do not accept our statement, then this is another matter altogether, and that deals with our integrity.

Another area of concern we would like for you to address is in regard to brother Dedmond. We also take this charge very serious. We had hoped that you would have substantiated such serious charges with facts. You did not. This is the second letter in which no specifics have been provided that would prove the allegation you have made of his unfaithfulness to the truth, and if such information is so readily available to prove the allegations, why do other congregations you consider to be faithful use and promote him. Last summer he was invited to participate on the summer series at White Oak. In the May 18th, 2005 bulletin of the Bremen church of Christ, he is advertised as holding a gospel meeting at Vila Rica. Surely you do not think that brother Rogers or the good brethren at White Oak would use or promote a man that is unfaithful to the truth. We have asked what evidence you have to prove the serious allegations. You simply state that the information is available if we cared to investigate. (3) Do you believe that it is fair to accuse brother Dedmond or any other person of unfaithfulness, but to provide no facts when asked for by the overseeing eldership? We would hope that if such allegations are made again, that specific facts are documented to prove such claims. And in all due respect, we would have hoped that because of the good relationship we have had with you over the past few years, that you would have had confidence in *us as the elders* who oversee the work, not so much in brother Dedmond who works *under* our oversight. However, we have met with brother Dedmond, prior to him assuming his role. We have had discussions with him regarding doctrinal matters, just as we would with *any* man who serves under our oversight. We were satisfied with *all* of his answers, and thus far no facts have been presented that prove otherwise. What more can we say? If you have facts, please provide them. Otherwise, please do not defame one of our evangelists who work under our oversight.

Another area of concern in your last letter dealt with the claim that other sound brethren were raising their "eyebrows" regarding this work. We certainly expected great scrutiny, especially from liberal brethren. We are attempting to bring about what is in our judgment the greatest effort of evangelism in modern times. Yet you make the assertion of eyebrows being raised. We would like to know the specific facts of this assertion. (4) Who are the "many eyebrows"? We would like to contact these "eyebrows" and address any concerns they have.

Another area is in regard to memorial gifts. In regard to your letter dated November 15th, you stated,

What about memorial gifts? Again, we ask a question, ***what joint work is a congregation participating in when one donates a book to the library*** (emphasis ours)? Any individual who donates a book or money to purchase books in memory of a friend or loved one does not constitute a ***join [sic] participation with any authorized work of the church*** (emphasis ours)....."

We assumed from this statement on November 15th. that you did not believe that a church library is an authorized work of the church, and that you therefore believed that laws of fellowship would not apply. Yet, in your letter on April 18th, you state, "*It is not denied* (emphasis ours) in our letter to you that a library is a work of the church.....Our statement reflects joint participation, not whether a library can be used for edification".

From this clarification we now understand you to affirm that the library is a work of the church, but that no fellowship is being extended to the unfaithful when they choose of their own accord to contribute to this specific work of the church, even though faithful members also choose to contribute to this work. Certainly we would agree with this conclusion. We do not believe that such a contribution from an unfaithful member means that laws of fellowship are being violated by the faithful. Yet the position you have taken regarding GBN is highly inconsistent with your position regarding the work of edification through a library . Your position as we understand it is that if Highland were to receive unsolicited funds from an unfaithful brother or congregation for GBN, that Highland would be fellowshipping the unfaithful simply in receiving such funds, and that the faithful who also contribute to this work would also be fellowshipping the unfaithful simply by their own contribution to GBN. As you noted, "...we refuse to join hands in a cooperative work with those who are tearing the church apart." Our question is this, (5) If a church library is a work of the church to provide edification, why doesn't Northside violate laws of fellowship when unfaithful members or even non-members choose to give toward this specific work (edification) of the church? And if there is no violation of fellowship in the example of a library, why do you continue to insist that such is the case in the specific work of a television program, which also provides edification.

Brethren, we believe that a church library is a work of the church. That is why we can support it financially. It provides both edification, and can even promote evangelism in some situations. No doubt this is why the Northside elders and the Highland elders would want to scrutinize materials that are placed in the library. If we were not dealing with matters regarding the truth of the Gospel, this would be unnecessary. Yet it is highly inconsistent for the Northside elders to affirm that Northside can receive non-solicited funds from unfaithful members or non-members for this work of the church, and then for the Northside elders to affirm that if such unsolicited funds were to be sent to our works of Preaching the Gospel of GBN, that such is a compromise of fellowship.

Another area we would like further clarification regarding is our fellowship with one another. You state,

"If you are asking if we have withdrawn fellowship from Highland the answer is no. We do believe the Bible is clear in its instruction in relation to fellowship. The doctrine of fellowship is a matter of faith not opinion...."

Yet in the next paragraph you state,

"As to our participation in G.B.N., we refuse to join hands in a cooperative work with those who are tearing the church apart."

Fellowship is a matter of faith. We agree. Yet this is not what is at issue. What is at issue is whether receiving *unsolicited funds* from the unfaithful to support the work of the church through the general collection, or through specific works such as a library or even a television program, always and every time constitutes fellowship. We affirm that such is not always the case. You have affirmed such as well by saying no violation occurs when one contributes to a library, which exist for the edification of the church and evangelism in some instances. Certainly anything can become an act of fellowship, but it doesn't necessarily follow that such *always* becomes fellowship. You have agreed with us that such does not necessarily always constitute fellowship in the area of the general collection, and in the area of a specific work such as a library. Yet we are sure that you would agree that even within the general collection,

fellowship would be violated if an appeal to the unfaithful or non-Christian were made to "join with us". What someone does of their own accord has no bearing upon the work of the faithful. You recognize this in the example of a library and the general collection. However, for some reason, you do not want to consistently apply such reasoning to the specific works of GBN or Preaching the Gospel.

(6) Now in conclusion, if we are in violation of a matter of faith, as you certainly imply, and if we are unknowingly fellowshipping the group that is "tearing the church apart", through our works of Preaching the Gospel and GBN, how can Northside scripturally fellowship Highland? Again, we see an inconsistency in your application of the teaching regarding this matter as well. If your charges are valid and we are not dealing with a matter of opinion, it would seem to us that you are indeed violating 2 John 9 by continuing to fellowship Highland through other efforts. But it doesn't end with just Highland. There is a broader application that consistency will demand. (7) How can you fellowship the good brethren who support the works of Preaching the Gospel and G.B.N.? If they were engaged in some type of unfruitful works of darkness in this matter, would the same not also apply to those who do support these works. If, as you indicate, that by supporting these efforts Northside would be joining hands in a cooperative work with those who are tearing the church apart, are not those who support these works then doing that very thing. (8) Furthermore, if you continue to fellowship the good brethren who support these efforts and who do not agree with your conclusions in this matter, are you not doing that very thing you imply that we are doing by joining hands with those who support these works? May we remind you that brother B.J. Clarke spoke in your meeting and he along with the Southaven church are involved in GBN. The Southaven congregation is financially supporting G.B.N. Brother Clarke has already recorded several programs for the network and will also be hosting his own program. Furthermore, the Memphis School of Preaching has endorsed this effort. They promoted it in the Yokefellow, and showed the DVD during a general assembly approximately one month after it showed at Freed-Hardeman. Obviously, they did not think that we solicited unfaithful brethren at the Freed Lectures. The Forrest Hill congregation that oversees the MSOP supports this effort. They are going to be airing their worship services on the network. Also, brother Cliff Goodwin, who is on your lectureship program for the fall, has voiced his support of this effort and for Preaching the Gospel. The Bremen congregation has supported Preaching the Gospel from the very beginning, even though they cannot pick the programming up in their area. Several of those who work with Truth for the World out of Duluth have been very supportive and helpful in bringing this work to fruition. I guess what we are saying is that if you continue to narrow your circle among good and faithful brethren, before long you may find that you are the only ones in your circle, and the course you good brethren seem to be following, if consistently pursued, will eventually leave you alone in your own circle.

We have affirmed from the beginning that this is a matter of judgment, not that the doctrine of fellowship is a matter of judgment, but that your application of it to these matters are a matter of judgment. We will affirm again, we do not endorse or fellowship any apostate congregation, and that our policy in this regard is no different than Northside's in receiving unsolicited funds in the general collection or in a specific work of the church such as a library.

We are on the verge of launching one of the great works of recent times. Many faithful brethren are enthusiastic over this effort. Northside, being so centrally located to Highland and the offices of GBN, could have been active in financially supporting the effort and in using your evangelists in doing some recording for the national audience, however, you have made it quite clear that you have no desire to participate. And the reasons you give are inconsistent with your own practice at Northside. We believe this is sad and regrettable. We would hope

that you would reconsider, and join sound brethren in this effort, but nevertheless, that is your decision. We certainly have no ill will toward any congregation that chooses not to support our mission efforts. There are many mission efforts that need support. However, the circumstances of your lack of support are troubling to us to say the least. It is very difficult to maintain a good relationship with brethren who will not support your efforts because they are casting doubt on your faithfulness.

The Highland Elders