

MCCLISH-GRIDER EXCHANGE REGARDING TGJ "RESIGNATIONS"

E-mail from Barry Grider to Dub McClish

July 29, 2005

Dear brother McClish,

In recent days I have received word of my name being circulated among some brethren regarding a supposed statement that I made to brother Bryan Braswell. The statement that I supposedly made indicated that Brother Cates had "already made up his mind" to seek your dismissal as editor of Gospel Journal before he left Memphis to attend the board meeting. This statement is not true. I know that brother Cates agonized for days and with tears over what to do concerning the problem that you caused with your "summation of Apologetics Press" email. At the time he left Memphis he was still not sure of the course of action that should be taken.

I did speak briefly to brother Bryan the week prior to the board meeting. I expressed my concern and brother Cates concern over your "summation of the A.P." email. I had also received brother Chesser's letter, and heard from numerous brethren who, like me, were gravely concerned and disappointed in what you had done through the "summation of A.P." email. However, at no time did I suggest brother Cates had made up his mind concerning your continuing as editor of the paper. Had I suggested such it would have been a falsehood.

I have once more talked to Bryan to make sure he did not misunderstand me and to make sure that I did not leave him with the wrong impression. Bryan stated he knew what I said, and that I did not indicate a decision had been made by brother Cates as to what your future with Gospel Journal should be. Hence, I do not know how this rumor started, but I would ask you to please help make sure it is not perpetuated.

While I strongly condemn your "summation of A.P" email and believe it did much harm to an already painful situation, I commend you for stepping aside as the editor of the Gospel Journal. I pray that you will take a more constructive course in days to come and encourage others to do likewise.

Sincerely in Christ,
Barry Grider

Letter from Dub McClish to Barry Grider

August 3, 2005

Mr. Barry Grider
Forest Hill Church of Christ
3950 Forest Hill-Irene Road
Memphis, TN 38125

Dear Barry:

Perpetuate implies continuation of something I have been doing. I could hardly perpetuate the rumor of which you wrote since I have never uttered or written it. You are therefore barking up the wrong tree if you suppose I have been circulating said rumor. I have never made

any such statement because I have never been told that any such statement was made to Bryan by you or anyone else. Nor have I even implied to anyone that you conveyed such information. Since I have not spoken with Bryan directly about any of your calls to him, I do not know what you may have said specifically to him. My information came from one of the Roanoke elders who, in a phone conversation the evening of July 17, told me of your call to Bryan a week before the meetings took place. My impression from what he told me was that you at least indicated to Bryan some of the subject-matter of those meetings, directly involving me. I wonder if it has not occurred to you that such rumors relating to your phone call and the substance of said call would not be flying if you had not made that call to begin with. You would not have needed to make the follow-up call to Bryan to refresh your memory on what you told him had you not made the first call.

When I told Curtis in the Board Meeting about your call to Bryan, he appeared surprised, if not shocked. He apologized that you had done so (not once, but twice) and did so profusely, before the entire Board. He said he did not know how you knew about the meetings (which I find a bit incredible) and said you had no business making any such call, even with the possession of such knowledge. I agree completely with Curtis. I have been accused by some of tale bearing and gossiping. How would you classify your calls to Bryan?

You have obviously inserted yourself into some matters involving TGJ and me personally with an aggressive, "hard ball" attitude. You did not need to tell me you "strongly condemned" my "Summation." I was fully aware of that from various sources, not the least of which was your bulletin article of June 28, "A Time To Be Silent," in which you all but called my name. This fact was not lost on others, either. Doubtless, some applauded your article, but don't think everyone appreciated it. If you had been around when the prophets and apostles were writing, I suppose we would have an entirely different Bible, at least had they heeded the dictum you laid down in your next-to-last sentence. We would not know of the sins in Eden, of Cain's murderous act, of David's adultery, of Solomon's idolatry, of Peter's denials of the Lord and dissimulation at Antioch, of Judas' betrayal of Jesus, of the lies of Ananias and Sapphira, ad infinitum. The inspired writers had no problem writing the records of the sins (repented of or not), even of the Bible's greatest heroes, not just for some temporary, perishable medium, but for the Book of the ages. Surely, you did not think through your judgmental statement before you wrote it.

In fact, many (including not a few MSOP alumni and friends of considerable repute) have conveyed to me that they deeply resent your involving yourself in these matters as you have done, believing you to be totally out of place (just as Curtis indicated concerning your phone call to Bryan). Some of them have even repeated to me their nickname for you: "The Mole." They believe you have been putting your political science degree to effective use, not only in this latest fiasco, but in earlier situations involving MSOP as well. You, Frank Chesser, and others who have been so quick to condemn me for "judging" others have proved yourselves huge hypocrites in your quick judgments of my motives and of me and in your numerous totally unwarranted assumptions relating to my AP "Summation." You have done your best to shame and defame me, when you are the ones who should be ashamed. A simple phone call from Frank when he first got the copy of my "Summation" would likely have prevented all of the firestorm of alienation among sound brethren that has resulted from his bombastic, over-the-top, knee-jerk-response letter which he scattered to the four winds. He did so on the basis of his unwarranted assumption that I had done the same with my "Summation," which is simply untrue. In other words, he judged me by his own motives and behavior in writing and distributing his letter. You surely know by now the extremely limited distribution I fully intended for my "Summation," but it obviously makes no difference to you. I really believe that you and Frank (and a few others) have proved that you were/are not really interested in the facts anyway. You and others may judge me and my "Summation" any way you choose. Your opinion of it is not law or Gospel. I make no apology whatsoever for writing what I did. Frank obviously believes I sinned in doing so. You seem to agree. For whatever it's worth, I asked the TGJ Board if they believed I sinned in writing it. Curtis answered for the Board, "No," and said that they had never entertained the idea that I had done so in their discussions. Once more, in this I completely agree with Curtis and the Board.

I trust you have received and read my letters of apology to Bert and Rhonda Thompson for the extra pain the unauthorized circulation of my "Summation" brought to them. I truly am regretful over that. It should never have happened, and it never would have happened had someone to whom I sent the "Summation" in confidence not decided—with no good reason—to break that confidence. However, anyone who assumes that my letters to them were an apology for writing the "Summation" or sending it to a few interested parties or that I was confessing in those letters that I sinned in writing the "Summation," has made another unwarranted assumption. They have not read carefully what I wrote, but have engaged in eisegesis rather than exegesis. I guess brethren like you and Frank used up all of your forgiveness, compassion, and mercy on Bert. I surely haven't heard any from any of you toward me relating to my letters to Bert and Rhonda. I know some are waiting for Frank to distribute my letters to them as widely as he distributed his slanderous hate letter to me, but none of us are holding our breath. It appears that the mercy/forgiveness/compassion "stream" flows only one direction from you sweet brethren.

The position you, Frank, and all of the signers of the AP "Statement of Support" (including Curtis) are now in is both contradictory, absurd, and, worst of all, unscriptural. By signing your names you are bidding Godspeed to a false teacher (2 John 9–11). His name is Dave Miller. The idea that one can promote an institution while not promoting or opposing its Director (and a Board member of same) is ludicrous, which is the "official position" the TGJ Board took when I questioned them about it directly on June 20 (to his credit, one of the Board members has now admitted that such a dichotomy is logically and Scripturally impossible). Curtis told me in an e-mail message (June 11) that he did not know Miller would be the new Director when he gave Miller permission to use his name. A "fly on the wall" has told me that both Curtis and Joseph Meador stated in the TGJ Board meeting on July 19 that, had they known this fact, they would not have permitted their names to be used. (Of course, there is a simple solution to that matter, at least for men of integrity and principle. They can easily issue a disclaimer if they are sincere.) Perhaps **none** who allowed their names to be used knew that Miller was to be the new Director when they gave their permission. However, some likely have had their heads so firmly in the sand that they were not even aware of his doctrinal errors. Again, some may know of, but may not even be concerned about Dave Miller's errors. Obviously, this was not true of Curtis and Joseph or they would not have indicated their refusals for AP to use their names had they known. I am confident that you had to know of Dave Miller's baggage from the time Bert made his stupendous, unbelievable coup in hiring him. Bert replied to the Miller objections he received from contributors (who immediately stopped their contributions) with either a perfunctory form letter or, in at least one case, with an irrational and irate denial of evidence offered, an unqualified defense of Miller, and an attitude of "how dare you question me, the great Bert Thompson" (no, this letter was not addressed to me). I wonder, now, if you, like Curtis, would say that you would not have allowed them to use your name had you known Dave was to be the new Director. If you would **not** have, will you allow them to "perpetuate" using your name as an endorsement?

I think I am safe in saying that the way to save a brother who teaches false doctrine is not the way so many brethren have been dealing with Dave Miller. Why should he repent when he is regularly invited to speak on various lectureships generally considered to be doctrinally sound (e.g., Spiritual Sword, Truth in Love, ETSOP, Polishing the Pulpit)? And what message does it send to a false teacher when other men known for their soundness go right on and speak on the same lectureships with him? The message to Dave is that he has nothing of which to repent. The message to brethren in general is the same—that Dave is completely innocent. This is hardly the way to bring a false teacher to repentance. It appears that if one gets a couple of masters degrees and a PhD, writes some good books, continues to deliver a conservative message, and continues to be used by faithful brethren, it just doesn't matter what errors he has committed (unless it was involvement in pedophilia, of course). But Dave can advocate grievous doctrinal errors and be given a pass, yea, even be promoted. Is pedophilia the only sin/error that is egregious enough to get the attention of the AP Board and the Palm Beach Lakes elders? (Of course, it doesn't hurt Dave's clout to himself be one of three AP Board members, but no one

should even suspect any conflict of interest in that regard). A blind man, thinking rationally, can see the gross double standard regarding AP's treatment of Bert's error and Dave's errors.

Frank Chesser well knows of Dave's doctrinal baggage from several sources; he has likely known of them almost from the time Bert hired Dave. As already mentioned, Bert was informed by several men of Dave's doctrinal errors at the time he hired him. The Palm Beach Lakes elders have been informed of Dave's errors, as have the other AP staff members. One is almost tempted to speculate that Dave must have some "goods" on all of these guys. Or maybe he has discovered the secret of creating an impenetrable force field around himself. Will it all come tumbling down on Dave one of these days, as Bert's "personal sins" of twenty years finally did on him? You say you want AP to survive and flourish, as do I. Are you to the point of accepting a means-justifies-the-end, whatever-it-takes attitude toward its survival? It surely seems so, not only with you, but with others as well.

I note a few ironies: You support a false teacher, but denounce me, not accused by any so far as I know (except radical enemies of the Truth) of teaching error. You have compassion for a confessed pedophile, but only abhorrence for me. You applaud a scurrilous letter written to and about me by an AP partisan who was beside himself when he wrote it, but you have nothing but contempt for a simple "Summation" I wrote concerning the AP scandal. You apparently hold me as a greater sinner than he who has confessed his 20-year addiction to pedophilia. You support AP with a false teacher at its head, but you vilify The Gospel Journal in which I have consistently taught and defended the Truth and exposed error in its brief 67-month life. As the expression goes, "go figure." Some day, perhaps, more calm and objective heads will see and admit that sheer emotion (as opposed to reason), brotherhood networking/politics, and fear of monetary loss have driven this hate campaign against me. It is a classic illustration of a mountain's being created out of less than a molehill.

Your commendation of my "stepping aside" as TGJ's editor was as undeserved as it was misplaced. Neither Dave Watson nor I merely "stepped aside." We were, in fact, **pushed** aside. The behavior of the Board on July 20 was graphically reminiscent of elderships that ask a preacher if he wants to resign or be fired, and then when he resigns, they say, "We didn't fire him, he resigned." Then, to add insult to injury, they absolve him of any sin or guilt and recommend him to high Heaven to other congregations. Parse or spin it any way you wish, the Board came there unhappy with our work and with us as Editors, and it breathed a collective sigh of relief when we "resigned." We simply saved their having to "fire" us, which neither Dave nor I have the slightest doubt would have occurred had we not "resigned."

The following information illustrates in the most graphic way possible the fact that when Dave Watson and I resigned, the Board got exactly what it wanted, whether or not it "had made up its mind" about us before the meeting: When Curtis and Joseph Meador resigned from TGJ's Board (7/11 and 7/12, respectively), the remaining Board members immediately got on the phone, imploring them to "unresign" (at least one Board member even offered to go to Memphis to appeal to Curtis in person). When Dave Watson and I resigned, not one Board member suggested we were too hasty in doing so, that this was a drastic measure, that we should talk about it, that perhaps we could work something out, or any other alternative, much less implored us to "unresign." We were simply asked to leave the Board meeting while the Board went through the formality of "deciding" how they should respond to our resignations. It took every bit of ten–twelve minutes for them to call us back in and read the unanimous resolution of the Board to accept our resignations. Again, no questions were asked or suggestions made of any alternatives. One of the great ironies in all of this is the following: Through the claims of one (perhaps two) Board members, the remainder of the Board was persuaded (in the July 19 all-day meeting) that TGJ was dead if I remained its Editor. These same influences also convinced the Board that my "reputation" was "ruined" because of my AP "Summation" that had been circulated. The sad fact is that the Board's action, taken under political pressure (and monetary threats in the case of at least one Board member) in allowing these sad events to transpire, has likely driven a

dagger to the very heart of *THE GOSPEL JOURNAL*, from which I fear it will not be able to recover.

Please don't mistake my words for bitterness. I am not the least bit bitter, but I am sorely disappointed in men who I thought were men of principle rather than of politics. You are mistaken if you think that the numerous brethren who are enraged at this turn of events are acting and speaking in defense of me, personally. They have the true sense that integrity, principle, and truth have been compromised and sacrificed, and they cannot bear to let it pass.

One more matter, and I will conclude. The final statement of your letter is condescending and patronizing at best, and insulting at worst. It hardly befits one who is young enough to be my son and who has not even one-fourth of the years of preaching experience that I have to lecture me on "a more constructive course." I do not say it boastfully, but I was fighting the good fight of the faith literally years before you were born. You really ought to think a bit more about "paying your dues" down in the trenches where some of us have been fighting the battles for decades before you start lecturing us older heads about "constructive" behavior.

Yours for the one faith,

Dub McClish
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Denton, TX 76209

PS Feel free to send this letter to whomever you choose, as long as you send it in its entirety. I plan to send yours and mine to various other interested brethren.

[Note: Upon receiving the letter above, Barry Grider called me and told me how much he "admired" and "respected" me. I made him admit that he specifically had me in mind in one of the illustrations he used during his lecture at Power Lectures and in an earlier Forest Hill bulletin article. He feigned great sweetness toward me in the phone conversation, however, he revealed his complete duplicity in an e-mail message to brother Michael Hatcher a few days later.]

E-mail from Barry Grider to Michael Hatcher

August 8, 2005

Dear Michael,

Thank you for the email. I appreciated having the opportunity to speak to you last week. I appreciate the kind disposition you demonstrated in the email, despite our disagreement over what has transpired. How different that was from brother McClish, who, after I sent a brief email asking him about the rumor, sent me a 4 page diatribe filled with viciousness and falsehood against me. This only reaffirms my belief that such a man did not deserve nor need to be in the position he was in. I had not done anything to the man, but disagreed with him about his "AP summation" email, and only did that in the same brief email in which I asked about the rumor. But, as one older preacher told me, you really do not have to do anything to Dub, he will do whatever he needs to do to serve his own purpose. That is becoming clearer every day. I believe you are a good man who, because of his closeness to those involved, has not been able to see the damage that brother McClish and a few others are capable of doing. I trust that in time you will.

brotherly,
Barry