

Defender



“I am set for the defense of the gospel”

Volume XXXVI August 2007 Number 8

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Recommended Reading: *A Time To Build*

Gary W. Summers

One of the most practical and scriptural volumes ever written about building up the Lord's church is this latest lectureship volume from the Bellview Church of Christ: *A Time To Build*. It is not just a book on evangelism, although one on that topic is always timely. It instead takes a holistic approach to building up the body of Christ.

The book contains 30 chapters, consisting of 431 pages, and begins with, “A Mind to Build.” This attitude is much better than “the status quo” thinking that often characterizes many congregations. Successful building incorporates at the outset attitudes that will bring forth fruit. Next, brethren must realize: “It is Time to Build.” The writer of this chapter correctly says:

There has never been a greater need to do so than today as we are completing the first decade of the twenty-first century! Sin is having a field day both in and out of the church of my Lord! (14).

Reasons are provided to support the assertions given in the above quote. A poem by J. T. Marlin, titled, “Wreckers” (26) explains why we never get off the ground in building.

“Principles of Building” follows. The perspective of this chapter is to view the church as one would a physical building. Given consideration are the architect, the price for the building, the foundation, the crew, and the building materials. Problems dealt with physical buildings are also found in the church: moisture problems, atmosphere problems, communication, and patience. Both this chapter and the preceding one emphasize the two passages that deal with conflict resolution in the church (Mat. 5:23-24; 18:15-17). The former passage says that if a person knows that someone has something against him, he should

go to that brother. The latter passage charges the offended brother to go to the one who wronged him.

“Building While Battling” is patterned after the time of Nehemiah when God's people followed precisely that course of action. One of the subheadings is both amusing and true: “If You are God's Builder, Trouble Knows Where to Find You” (43). The material here is both realistic and encouraging to those trying diligently to do the Lord's will.

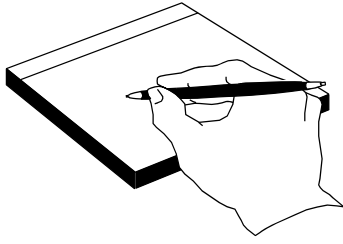
Another dose of realism is found in “Tearing Down to Build Up,” as God charged His faithful prophet Jeremiah (1:9-10). Seven specific areas are listed, in which there needs to be some tearing down to build properly; these are followed by further suggestions.

“Building All Things According to the Pattern” is crucial if anything is to be constructed properly. The writer of this chapter came out of a denomination; thus, the pattern is of great importance to him (as it should be to all). He presents a biblical study of the word *pattern*, exhorts brethren to follow that pattern, and then sets forth some current departures from that pattern, including the unity meeting that some apostate brethren had with members of the Christian Church at last year's North American Christian Convention (83-86).

“Building on the Proper Foundation” accents many fundamental teachings in the New Testament and is followed by “Building Better Homes.” As the reader might expect, the writer talks about the home in general, marriage, parents, children, and grandchildren. The reader will particularly want to find out about ODD (106). “Building Better Young People”

(Continued on page 4)

Notes From The Editor



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A Cause

In a speech made by Patrick Henry to the Virginia House of Burgesses on March 23, 1775, Henry concluded his speech by saying: “Give me liberty or give me death.” Henry realized the truth that there were some *causes* which were more important than life itself. The cause of Christ is certainly one of those causes that is worth more than physical life because it deals with life eternal.

In the long ago, David heard the challenge of Goliath and asked, “What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel? for who *is* this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?” (1 Sam. 17:26). After a rebuke by his brother Eliab, David says, “What have I now done? *Is there* not a cause?” (17:29). There was a cause, but sadly, the Israelites were not *stepping up to the plate*. They sat idly by while the uncircumcised Philistine reproached God’s people. David was willing to defend the right and went to battle Goliath. He trusted in God to give him the victory, even over a force that would seem insurmountable.

There have been causes that are worth more than dying for throughout time. Today we have many who have laid down their armor and not only surrendered but are now aiding and abetting the enemy. There are also causes today that means more than life.

Bible Authority

The Bible is God’s Word (2 Tim. 3:16-17). In Jesus’ prayer to the Father, He prayed: “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth” (John 17:17). Paul would write, “But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15). Notice

that the church is the pillar and ground of the truth which is God’s Word. It is the duty of the church to defend God’s Word. Yet, today the Bible is attacked on every front. We have always known that those outside the body of Christ were going to attack the Scriptures. What is sad is that today, those inside the church have so little respect for God’s Word. We are to do only what the Bible authorizes (Col. 3:17). Yet, many Christians have no concern whether or not God authorizes what they do anymore. If they want to do it, they go ahead and do it. They have no more respect for the Bible than the denominational folks all around us, although they claim that they love God’s Word (just like the denominations). We need to have a respect for the Word of God and be a people of the Book.

The Church

The church is a divine institution which was planned before the creation of the world (Eph. 3). Those of the premillennial persuasion have denigrated the church into an afterthought with God. Those in the church have a cause to fight for knowing that the church was in the eternal purpose of God. Denominationalism destroys the uniqueness of the Lord’s church. Our Lord built His church: “And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Mat. 16:18). He did not build many churches; He built one. Paul writes “*There is* one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling” (Eph. 4:4), and he identifies that body as the church (Eph. 1:22-23). Sadly, some in the church have accepted denominationalism and have even thanked God for the divisions that have taken place. Yes, we have a cause for which to fight.

Within the Lord’s church, He has instituted certain things for us to do and be. We are to worship God (John 4:23-24). God has authorized us to worship Him in spirit and in truth. Spirit has to do with our attitude as we worship, and truth has to do with it being according to the pattern God has established. That pattern which God has set is that (1) we are to sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to Him. (2) We have been commanded to pray to the Father through the mediatorship of Christ. (3) Each first day of the week (Sunday) we are to remember the sacrifice which our Lord made by partaking of the unleavened bread and fruit of the vine in the Lord’s Supper. (4) Each first day of the week we are to give of our means into the church treasury. (5) God has instructed that there be the preaching of the Word.

The denominations have perverted each of these

areas—which is to be expected from them. However, what is surprising is that we must stand against those who claim to be members of the Lord’s church now. Congregations like Richland Hills in Texas have added mechanical instrumental music to their worship. Before that, the way was paved by groups like Acapella who made their voices sound like instruments of music (neither action has authority from God and they are thus sinful). We have those who claim and practice praying to Jesus (addressing their prayers to Jesus). There is as much authority for praying to Jesus as there is for praying to the Holy Spirit, Mary, one of the apostles, or anyone else. Christians have been changing the day God authorized. Some have taken the Supper of our Lord on Saturdays, Thursdays, and other days of the week. The church has long had trouble with those who would not give liberally of their means. Preachers have gotten farther from God’s Word in their preaching and teaching with brethren wanting their ears tickled instead of desiring the meat of the Word. Yes, there is a cause for which we need to be standing.

There are many in the church today who have perverted the mission of the church. The Lord’s church has one mission—saving souls. The saving of souls is accomplished through preaching God’s Word to the lost, edifying of those who are saved, and benevolent actions to those who are in need. However, congregations all across the brotherhood have changed the mission of the church from the saving of souls to recreation, entertainment, and a social and physical emphasis instead of a spiritual emphasis. Congregations have wasted millions of dollars on “family life centers” which are nothing more than gymnasiums to attend to the social and physical. We have a spiritual cause for which to stand.

There are those who have altered the organization of the beautiful bride of Christ. The Catholic Church setup an organization where one man was over their entire denomination. Other denominations set up boards to be over their group or the preacher is the one in charge. There are those in the church who have changed the organizational pattern of the church. There are those who teach that elders have no authority except for their example. Now we have those who have advocated and practiced placing the elders under a certain percentage of the members by practicing elder reevaluation (i.e. if more than x% do not approve of the elder, they do not remain within the eldership, whether qualified or not). The organization which God set forth is something for which we must stand.

Discipline

In our society, discipline has almost become a joke. Children, instead of being disciplined (both preventive and corrective), are allowed to run loose. Children so often control the home instead of the parents controlling the children. When the children get out of line and need corrective discipline, often no discipline comes. Parents who truly love their children will properly train them in the way they should go, and will practice corrective discipline when needed.

In the Lord’s church, discipline (both preventive and even more so corrective) has almost been forgotten. Elders fail to make sure the preacher preaches the Word and only the Word and all of the Word to prevent brethren from going astray. When brethren do go astray, elders are to lead the congregation in corrective discipline—withdrawing fellowship from that one in a loving effort to save their souls. Yet, God’s command to withdraw fellowship from those walking disorderly is basically an ignored command in most places. However, God’s people have a cause for which to stand.

Fellowship

Fellowship with God is utmost. Those in fellowship with God are in fellowship with each other. God will not fellowship some individuals. We must not fellowship those whom God refuses to fellowship. God will not fellowship those who transgress His Word—those who do not abide in the doctrine of Christ (2 John 9). For those who are in fellowship with God to begin fellowshiping those whom God will not will cause them to be separated from God also. Yet, it seems so many care nothing about fellowship today. They will fellowship those who they know have taught and practiced false doctrine (and have not repented of it). We have congregations who will advertise whatever is going on in the area whether a congregation is faithful or not. Preachers freely run articles in their bulletin (if they even run articles anymore) when they knew the writer is not what he should be. The concept of standing alone with God no longer seems to be around for so many in the church today. Today it seems as if it is more follow the crowd, no matter what. We need more elders, preachers, and members who realize there is a cause for which to stand and then take a stand.

Conclusion

The cause of Christ is the greatest cause there ever could be. This is the only cause that deals with the eternal destiny of the soul. Let us be willing to die for it, but even more so, let us live for it. *MH*

(Continued from page 1)

expands on the previous material, discussing the qualities that are so much needed in young people.

The tenth chapter takes us back to the body of Christ: "Building the Church (Spiritually and Numerically)." Amidst other good information, the penman discusses four "Pseudo" means of trying to bring about church growth (137-42).

In "Building World Evangelism" the writer covers quite a bit of territory, including: "Trials in Mission Work," "Campaigns," and "The Cost of Evangelism." The next two chapters are devoted to something that cannot be overlooked: "Building Peace Among Brethren" and "Building Unity in the Church." The first of these deals with the scriptural basis for unity, which must be considered first and foremost. The latter one mentions a few works that many brethren do not feel comfortable having fellowship with. The reader is exhorted:

Brethren, we can build unity in the church by encouraging the faithful. May we thoroughly investigate that in which we intend to invest the Lord's money, so as to insure just that (170).

"Building Better Bible Schools" covers four important aspects of a congregation's education program. It examines the purpose for having a Bible school and sets forth the qualifications for a teacher, including a sample questionnaire that may be used to make sure that teachers are qualified to teach either young people or adults (200-206). Choosing decent Bible school materials has often proved to be a nightmare for many education directors. A sample of a Bible lesson used by all the classes in a congregation is included in the book (196-200). These will soon be available on a DVD or in printed form. Another section of this chapter shows how a computer flash card system can be used to make sure that students are remembering the material and not forgetting all that they have studied (183-95). This material is very practical and may be of interest to several congregations.

"Building Better Bible Students" and "Building Your Personal Library" are related topics with more excellent and practical advice. The former chapter include three prerequisites for building better Bible students (210-212), which is followed by suggesting adequate preparations be made. The "library" chapter gives advice for keeping the cost of books low and lists several reference works that are helpful to the Bible student—by category. A serious student will profit from the list of books published here (225-30).

The next four chapters deal with building better worship. The first of these defines worship and lists six things that pertain to God's love of us. If we understand the nature of God, then we can better understand how we ought to worship Him. "Building a Better Prayer Life" should be of interest to all Christians, and the acronym, A-C-T-S is handy for one's own use or to be able to explain to others (249). "Building Better Singing" contains an examination of what was practiced in both the Old and the New Testaments, but one of the greatest values is encouraging brethren to sing "in truth," as well as "in spirit." Many songbooks contain verses written by those spiritually in error, and various songs contain concepts that are not taught in the Scriptures. Some errors brought to light are found in songs such as, "Just a Little Talk With Jesus," "He Lives," "Jesus is Coming Soon," and various others (272-77).

"Building Better Givers" rounds off this section; the author is not afraid to say that this topic is often much neglected. The writer uses humor to make some very sharp points, by which many could profit.

The next five chapters deal with leadership: the first of these defines the work of elders; the second considers both the qualifications and the work of deacons. The one on preachers gives some practical suggestions of ways to improve. Particularly of interest were these two sentences:

This preacher graduated from the Memphis School of Preaching and two universities before really understanding why some brethren do not listen. A man can know the Book and quote it all day long and still not be an effective preacher (323).

"Building Churches that are Concerned about Preachers" is a topic that one does not hear much about, but it is one that a few congregations need. "Building Tomorrow's Leaders" is always of vital interest. The biggest mistake that the church could make would be in failing to train men to be elders, deacons, teachers, and servants. A variety of suggestions is provided for helping congregations carry out this important endeavor.

"Building Better Attitudes" is something we all can use perennially, and the author specifically looks at how to develop better attitudes toward God, toward our brethren, and toward the lost. "Building Better Members" has an intriguing section: "We Are Made Better Through God's Recipe for Victory"; fourteen aspects of victory are presented (376-77). Eight points about Jesus are offered from Isaiah 53 (379-82).

One thing no congregation should be without can be found in "Building Better Love One for Another."

Few are those who do not know this principle, but many have difficulty applying it. This chapter can help rekindle the kind of love that ought to characterize every church of Christ.

Another topic that often goes neglected in many congregations is taken up in “Building Better Discipline.” The writer encourages both preventive and corrective discipline and sets forth the reasons that the Scriptures give for doing so.

The final chapter is anything but a disappointment: the book is capped off with material we need for

“Building Courage.” After scriptural examples of courage are listed, there is an important section on “What Courage is Not” (429-30).

As the reader has seen by this time, this book is well-rounded—in terms of setting forth what it means to be a Christian and a builder. The wealth of material far exceeds the price of \$15 (plus postage and handling); it may be ordered from the Bellview Church of Christ, 4850 Saufley Field Road, Pensacola, FL 32526. Their telephone number is (850) 455-7595.

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“Easy to Entreat”

Lynn Parker

Sometimes we differ with brethren in matters of opinion. Over these matters, brethren may either compromise, or they may never see eye-to-eye, and fellowship continues. Other situations center squarely on doctrinal matters—those obligatory matters set down by authority of Heaven. In this latter area of doctrinal matters, compromise is sinful and division is inevitable if no repentance is manifested (1 Cor. 11:18-19). How can the division be prevented or rectified? Surely we understand that all must be on the same doctrinal page (1 Cor. 1:10). However, one particular ingredient to resolving such difficult matters is found in James 3:

Who is wise and understanding among you? let him show by his good life his works in meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter jealousy and faction in your heart, glory not and lie not against the truth. This wisdom is not *a wisdom* that cometh down from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where jealousy and faction are, there is confusion and every vile deed. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without variance, without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for them that make peace (vv. 13-18).

Please note that James describes the heavenly, God-approved wisdom as “easy to be entreated.” The phrase under consideration is translated from the Greek, *eupetithes*, meaning “good for persuasion, easily obeying, compliant, approachable, persuadable.” Now there are but two types of wisdom—that which is “earthly, sensual, devilish,” and that wisdom which is “from above.” One or the other will be employed by folks in a dispute.

In doctrinal matters where fellowship is based on speaking the same thing, there must be a heart that is easy to entreat. Perhaps you have studied the Bible with

a Protestant only to hear the study conclude with the words: “I just can’t see that baptism is essential to salvation.” Yet, after being adequately taught the truth, evidence now points to a hardened heart. He could see the truth **if** his heart was open to instruction and correction.

One couple in a congregation—both of whom had taught Bible classes—taught error on church discipline and God’s laws of fellowship to some in the church. Repeated requests to meet and study the matter were met by this couple with a stubborn refusal, and they finally left the congregation. In this sad case, hearts refused entreaty.

As we think about matters that have hurt the church and divided brethren, surely the past years of dealing with (1) elder re-evaluation and re-affirmation; (2) the peculiar marriage, divorce, remarriage error that deals with the intent to be married (among other facets); and (3) errors regarding fellowship, as taught, practiced, and condoned by Dave Miller and others, will go down in church history as another especially trying time for the brotherhood.

An indicator of the mind-set and heart condition of those supporting and thus condoning Miller’s errors is that they refuse to be entreated. They have had opportunities to meet and discuss that were not to their liking and thus rejected. I listened to Curtis Cates and Keith Mosher on the Internet at the West Kentucky Lectureship open forum at the Sunny Slope congregation in Paducah, Kentucky, in which they described those that oppose them (and Dave Miller) as both liars and “vile” (Mosher’s description). In response to this, on April 3, 2007 at 8:38 P.M., using as the subject: “Re: Recent statements;” I sent the following email to them both at the addresses listed on the web site for Mem-

phis School of Preaching.

AN OPEN LETTER TO BRETHREN CATES AND MOSHER

Brethren:

During an Open Forum, you made a charge that brethren opposing you were “vile” and lying. You defended Dave Miller. You rejected the opportunity offered you at the Spring, Texas Open Forum. By way of this email, I am proposing that the two of you, on behalf of FH and MSOP, appear on a forum of your design at the Forest Hill building or some other mutually agreeable location.

I offer to be one of two or more speakers representing opposition to your practices (especially regarding fellowship) and claims. If I am not acceptable to you, please name the man or men who would be. I would stipulate that the forum be (1) public and (2) video or tape-recorded with copies available to anyone who requests one.

The purpose of this forum would be to present the truth, expose error, and inform the brotherhood. Details of the discussion topics, dates, and times can be arranged mutually but we still would say that we are asking you to begin arrangements since our proposals have not been acceptable to you.

Surely you believe that truth has nothing to fear from exposure (1 Thess. 5:21; 1 Pet. 3:15). “The ball is in your court.”

For the brotherhood and the truth,
Lynn Parker

Brethren, to date there has been no response from

Cates or Mosher. Some months ago I wrote a letter of concern to a once dear friend, Garland Elkins, also with Memphis School of Preaching. To date, I have heard nothing from brother Elkins.

Brethren, these matters will not go away with time—repentance is necessary. But first hearts must be easy to entreat. Lacking that type of heart and exhibiting a calloused refusal to meet, we can draw certain conclusions—a righteous judgment, if you will (John 7:24). **These brethren simply have no desire for resolution, unity, or a frank discussion of the doctrinal matters that divide brethren.** They are not easy to entreat. Thus, their wisdom, we properly conclude, is not from above!

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Editor’s Note: I would also be willing to meet with these brethren in a public meeting that is taped such as brother Parker suggested. I would add one other stipulation which is that the forum be fair (to both sides). Since they (Curtis Cates, Dave Miller, et. al.) have rejected two offers of which I am aware to meet, we urge them to set up a meeting themselves where everything can be put before the brethren. If they are not willing to set it up at Forrest Hill congregation, then possibly at some other congregation. Brethren, we desire unity, not division. However, we can only have unity when it is based on truth. We refuse to compromise the truth to stay in the *good graces* of brethren. Brethren, let us all do what is biblically necessary for unity to be restored. It is too precious for it not to be and we must remember that souls are at state.

Did He Say “Vile”? Did He Say He Meant to Say “Vile”?

Jess Whitlock

Keith Mosher: Speaking at the Open Forum, West Kentucky Bible Lectures—2006 Sunny Slope in Paducah, KY

This statement is typed [showing it to the audience], which means the brother or sister had it made up before they got here. I call those set-up questions. And I’m speaking for myself—not the Memphis School of Preaching. I teach logic, and this is the kind of question that says, “Have you stopped beating your wife?” It doesn’t matter what we say; somebody’s going to write about us. I’ve been preaching for 42 years, brethren, and I stand right where I stood 42 years ago. And my friends will

believe that, and my enemies won’t, but these people are as **vile** a group, and I do mean **vile** as I have ever read after in my life. I have never seen the kind of attitude they have. They want to destroy about nine good works in the brotherhood just to prove a point [Emphasis mine—JW].

Danny Douglas: Speaking at the Bellview Lectures in Pensacola—2007

In responding to the above, brother Douglas asked brother Mosher:

When you and the Memphis School of Preaching opposed Malcolm Hill and TBC (and rightly so), for upholding Mac Deaver in his false doctrine of the

direct operation of the Holy Spirit upon the Christian, did that make **you** vile??? Did that mean you were trying to destroy good brotherhood works?

Paul wrote in Ephesians 4:32: "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." Webster defines *vile* as: "a. morally despicable or abhorrent, b. physically repulsive, 2: of little worth or account, 3: tending to degrade, 4: disgustingly or utterly bad." I see a tremendous contrast between what Paul wrote and what brother Mosher said in light of Webster's definition of *vile*.

Most brethren are aware that all of this bitter controversy surrounds one simple question. Is brother Dave Miller a false teacher? That question can easily be answered by any person who has studied this issue with a simple "yes" or "no." It seems that those who know that Dave Miller is a false teacher do not want to know anything about Matthew 7:15, Mark 13:21-22, Acts 20:28-31, Romans 16:17-18, Galatians 1:6-7, Ephesians 5:11, Colossians 2:4, 8, 2 Timothy 3:6, Hebrews 13:9, 2 Peter 2:1-3, 1 John 4:1, and especially 2 John 9-11. God had previously recorded in Psalm 119:104: "therefore I hate every false way."

When preachers, elders, and teachers of the Word adamantly refuse to warn against false teachers and

false doctrine, we have abandoned a holy charge given of God (Acts 20:28ff; 2 Tim. 4:1-4). It breaks the heart and brings tears to the eyes to see the Lord's body ripped asunder. It will always be right for the faithful to stand against false teachers and false doctrine (2 The. 2:15).

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Editor's Note: At the end of brother Mosher's comments about Dave Miller, he said: "If you're going to believe some of these publications you're going to have a problem because those brethren are lying to you." It is very easy to get up in a friendly environment and make accusations against someone. It is another matter to **prove** the accusations. I am presenting a challenge to brother Mosher to **document** and **prove** any lies *Defender* has printed about Dave Miller!

Brother Mosher knows very well how to document material since he has an earned doctorate degree. Thus, he should have no difficulty in documenting any lies *Defender* might have published. Those associated with the West Kentucky Bible Lectures should hold him accountable for the statements he made at their lectures as should Memphis School of Preaching where brother Mosher teaches. If he cannot document and prove the charges he has made, then he needs to retract them and repent of them.

Newly Updated CD

The 1988-2005, 2007 books, all *Defender* issues of 1970, 1972-2006, along with numerous other books, tracts, and studies are available on computer disk in Adobe Acrobat Reader (PDF) format (making it useful for both Intel and Macintosh computers). The Acrobat Reader is also provided on the CD. The CD is completely indexed allowing searches of all the books at the same time (you can find every occurrence of a word or phrase such as "baptism for the remission of sins" in every book at the same time). The cost of the CD is only \$75 plus postage/handling fee of \$1.25 (total is \$76.25) in which you receive all the lectureship books (less than \$4 per book) and other material. If you purchased a previous version of our CD, then check with us for an upgrade at a significant reduction in price upon the return of the previous CD. Take advantage of this great offer. Order from Bellview Church of Christ.

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MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR

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