

Dear TGJ Board Members:

Before I say anything else, I want to assure you that I am not challenging your **right** to remove Dub and David from their respective positions as editor and associate editor. I only ask that you examine your motives carefully. Please examine also the manner in which this thing was done, and see if you can defend your motives (I am not presuming to judge your thoughts and motives, but I can evaluate your actions) and your manner according to the standard of God's Word. One more thing: Please do not automatically discount what I have to say on the basis of my sex alone. I am not a "hysterical, emotional woman." I do my own reasoning, studying, and thinking.

I was, frankly, distressed that you would allow anyone to pressure you into betraying us without either a just or a Scriptural cause. The entire board (on 7/20) admitted that Dub had not sinned. Think about it: Suppose Dub **had** been guilty of sin of some kind, or of teaching something false, or lying and slandering, or being contentious. Would any board member—even one—ever have tried to talk to him and admonish him over the past five years about his "sins," or even his "poor judgment"? (Come to think of it, one board member [in 2001] **did** lodge several criticisms concerning practical matters he felt were not being properly carried out. These criticisms came across as arrogant and hypocritical, to us, considering the fact that the critic himself was not able to do the things he insisted the editor could do if he just put forth the effort [such as getting every issue to the subscribers' mailboxes "on time"]. As far as we know, the rest of you did not share that point of view.) Frank Chesser is the one who committed the sin(s), which ignited this whole mess, not Dub. Only Michael has dared to state openly that it was Frank Chesser rather than Dub who sinned in the AP controversy, a fact obvious to anyone with any degree of objectivity. Bert has been made the victim, Frank the champion, and Dub the villain (shades of "woe unto them that call good evil and evil good" [Isa. 5:20]).

Can any board member show me the Scriptural authorization or justification for secretly storing up all these complaints and grievances that are now coming out (e.g., "issue-oriented," congregational "meddling," "too much like *CFTF*," "harsh writing," et al.), waiting for just the right moment to pounce and spring them upon the unsuspecting victims? That is exactly the tactic a former Pearl Street elder used, as some of you will doubtless remember, when he came up with his "selling-books-on-church-property-is-sin" "conviction." In all the months when he was getting his case together, he never said one word—not even a hint; he never tried to reason with Dub from Scripture, attempting to show him where he was "wrong"; he allowed the books to be sold on Pearl Street property; and he even bought a book himself. He did all this while he was acting in a way contrary to his "convictions," so as not to let anything slip until he had it all ready. Can those who do such things—to a brother who trusts them—honestly say they are following

the "Golden Rule"? Would you want to be treated in that way? Would you be offended if you were treated in such a way? Would you feel betrayed if you were thus treated? The entire thrust of the Bible condemns such behavior. Even slaves of Christian masters were entitled to better treatment (Col. 4:1).

I keep thinking of some basic principles that are applicable here. So far as I know, no one has yet mentioned them, although I know all of you know them well (probably much better than I), even if you don't seem inclined to apply them. For instance: If you would give in so easily and quickly to pressure and/or threats from "friends" and brothers, without questioning, without asking for proof, without even having a just cause (merely an **alleged** cause, at that, and not an accusation of sin), what will you do when you are faced with actual persecution—even physical persecution—if you offend someone? I feel that such an idea is rapidly passing from the theoretical into the realm of probability. In our country. In our time. When you are threatened with prison if you continue to teach and preach, or to condemn homosexuality or abortion, what will you do? What will you do when a woman takes you to court, demanding that she be allowed to preach? Suppose she sues you for the church property, the church bank account, your own houses, and your own bank accounts? Given your recent behavior, why should anyone expect you to have the strength and courage to defend the Cause in the face of such persecution?

When Ahab met Elijah and said, "Is it thou, thou troubler of Israel?" (1 Kin. 18:17), Elijah's response was not to apologize and promise to quit troubling Israel, or to bring a kinder, gentler, less negative message from Jehovah. He didn't promise that he would concentrate on the **positive** aspects of God's Word, stop being so "issue-oriented," and quit meddling in other people's affairs. No, Elijah laid the blame squarely on Ahab's shoulders. The one who didn't want to hear the Truth, who wanted to "shoot the messenger," is the one who was troubling Israel. When the apostles told Jesus that He had offended the Pharisees, what was His reaction? He proceeded to offend them even further (Mat. 15:12–14). Make the applications.

When Peter and John were beaten because they were preaching Christ publicly, did they promise not to do it again? The "Powers That Be" commanded them not to speak any more in His name. Instead of saying, "Well, I guess we had better mend our ways. We don't want to make them angry and get beaten again. That might ruin our reputations and give the church a black eye!" No, they said, "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). When I was a child, I remember that weak Christians would sometimes pointedly suggest to my father that he "preach the Gospel and let other folks alone." In other words, don't preach the parts of the Gospel that might offend anyone—either in the church or out. That spirit survives today.

Paul wrote to the Galatians, "For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ" (Gal. 1:10). Has there ever been a time—during any Dispensation, Old Testament or New—when those who belong to God are encouraged to take the easy way out when they are under pressure? Are we ever promised that God will not allow us to suffer humiliation, financial loss, or being ostracized by those we love, for His name? "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3:12). Jesus said, "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Mat. 10:28).

When several of you first conceived the idea of a new periodical, you all, with one voice, insisted, and continued to insist, that Dub must be the editor. He was your first and only choice. He badly wanted to do it, but I was hesitant. I knew he would be perfect for the job, so that was not the motivation for my hesitation. However, since he was already editing the Denton Lectures books (and I was proof-reading and checking Scriptures on those), directing the lectureship (and I was doing almost all the secretarial work on that), and doing a great deal of traveling (most of the Valid Publications work was left to me, and I fell further and further behind), I knew there was no place in our lives to cut out the huge chunk of time that editing *The Gospel Journal* would require. We already had almost no time together, and I knew the time would come out of what we had normally devoted to eating, sleeping, and other such frivolities. I reluctantly gave in.

I soon realized that it would be even worse than I had envisioned. He spent almost a year learning all that he could about producing the paper, raising funds, and trying to get everything in readiness for that first issue, January 2000. I helped as much as I could with proof reading, Scripture checking, and so forth. My health began (actually I think it had already begun) to deteriorate. Dub poured his life, his heart, and his soul into *The Gospel Journal*, and I tried to support him in every way I was able. He almost never took a day off, or sat down and watched television at night, or took any time to relax at all. He sacrificed these things, and the time he might have spent with his family (and Paige and I gave up his time with us), for the paper. Even when he was on the road he had to work on *TGJ* constantly to keep it on schedule. He became constantly fatigued.

I know that Ken has worked tirelessly as business manager, but not a one of you (including Ken) has any idea how much work each of the sixty-seven issues (thirty-six pages each) of the paper required. Tommy **may** soon begin to appreciate these things a bit more. I am telling you all this so you will know, not only what Dub gave to *The Gospel Journal*, but also what I gave—and gave up—as well. And this "mother of all boards" (created [for the most part] for the purpose of keeping the *Journal's* content pure and Scriptural, protecting it from editors who might go astray, and protecting its integrity) has destroyed—purely

for political/financial advantage, of all things—what we and others had worked so hard to begin, build, and keep going.

I ask that each one of you read and think seriously about what I have written. I know I have been blunt, but I hope I have not been rude. I have not intended to be. Please pray about it as well.

Sincerely and truly,

Lavonne McClish