

E-MAIL EXCHANGES BETWEEN DUB MCCLISH AND CURTIS CATES WITH SOME OBSERVATIONS

Dub McClish e-mail to Curtis Cates, June 10, 2005:

Dear brother:

I hope you had a good meeting at Mablevale. I'm know you are aware of all of the stir about the AP/Bert Thompson scandal. I have sent you and the other TGJ Board Members a summary of the information that has come to me, along with some of my reactions to that information. I did not put this together for distribution, but to make notes on these sad events while they were fresh. I have sent my summary to only a very few, with the request that they not distribute it. I am not on any sort of crusade to hurt AP. In fact, I believe it to be a good and necessary work. However, there is no way that I can support AP under the present circumstances, for with Dave Miller at its head, "there is death in the pot" as far as I am concerned. I note in the "explanation packet" that AP has mailed to supporters (past and present) that your name and the name of Joseph Meador appear on the "Statement of Support" list.... I know you will correct me if I am wrong, but I have difficulty believing that either you or Joseph (I know you can't speak for him) would have signed on to this statement had you known Dave Miller would be the new head of AP.

I am confident that you are aware that Miller was one of the principals (he was Brown Trail preacher at the time) who pushed Brown Trail's first elder reaffirmation debacle in 1990, which I documented fully in my chapter in the 1997 Bellview book. He was still there when Brown Trail did its second elder reaffirmation in 2002, and although he was not the Brown Trail preacher by this time (he was Director of the SOP), Dave defended its recurrence. (Marvin Weir documents Dave's involvement in his article in *TGJ*, October 2002, pp. 25–26.) If Dave has changed his tune concerning these procedures, he has kept it very quiet. He has now had several years in which to do so. Yet he **did not** keep his support of them quiet at all. Further, Dave defended the mock marriage of a Jamaican student to a cousin, the purpose of which was to gain entry to and residency privileges in the U.S., fully intending to legally dissolve the marriage upon gaining entry and resident status, **which he did** (D. Brown wrote a lengthy article in *CFTF*, April 2004, pp. 7–10, describing and exposing that which Everett Chambers did and which Dave defended, even in BTSOP classes, among other places). Miller even promoted Chambers to be his assistant director of the school, which act produced all kinds of turmoil and almost destroyed the school altogether. (Incidentally, Chambers drives up from Fort Worth and preaches for a little splinter group about five miles north of Denton.) Before he moved on and became Bert's great prize catch for AP, Dave ended up having secret meetings with only a few of the elders and engineered the ouster of those who dared question him. These form the "legacy" of Dave's work in our area that hang as a heavy cloud over what good he did in the twelve or thirteen years he was at Brown Trail. I know that Joseph was well aware of Dave's behavior near the close of his tenure at Brown Trail, because some of the Brown Trail folk (including at least one BTSOP instructor) talked to him about it, and Joseph discussed these matters

freely with me at the time they were occurring. If memory serves me, Joseph accepted some of the BT students who left BTSOP in disgust over these matters.

All who dared question Bert about Dave Miller's hiring were shot down as dodos who didn't know what they were talking about, or worse, personal enemies just trying to make trouble for him and Dave. Ironically, Bert treated all such querists in the same way ACU treated him and Wayne Jackson in 1986 when they blew the whistle on the evolution being taught in the biology department: Deny, defend, and try to discredit the accusers and/or witnesses. Bert's egomania really came out in his responses (one would have to be an egomaniac to believe that he could engage in homosexual behavior for 20 years under the delusion that he was above being caught or exposed). In the AP explanation packet, Dave Miller's letter admitted that AP is in a financial bind and has been doing "deficit spending"..."for months." I know at least one reason that they are in a financial crunch. I can add up approximately \$1,000.00 per month in support that AP lost almost immediately upon the hiring of Dave Miller, some from congregations and some from individuals. I have already been told of one congregation and of two individuals who stuck with AP in spite of Dave's hiring, but who cannot abide his being "ED" of AP, so they have summarily ceased their support. I fully expect there are already and will be several more. Dave's appointment is the third big blow to AP in as many years. The first was Miller's hiring. The second is Bert's "personal sins" and removal. The third is Dave's elevation to "ED." Actually, there is a fourth blow: The "explanation packets" will hurt instead of helping AP. In the first place, the news of Miller's appointment will hurt them. In the second place, the Palm Beach Lake elders and AP chose to stone-wall and tip-toe, and I believe their letters will raise more questions than they satisfy. It may not be significant, but I think it is very interesting, to say the least, that the names of those on the AP Board **ARE NOT** listed on the new AP letterhead the packet contained. However, they do appear on the AP Website. Of the three men on the Board, **Dave Miller is one of them.**

Now I am in a bit of a quandary. *TGJ* has carried an expose of some of Dave Miller's serious doctrinal problems in. As editor, I stand behind this expose because I know it to be factual. All kinds of pressure was put on me by some of my then fellow-elders [at Pearl St.] to write a statement of disclaimer concerning the article, which I steadfastly refused. The Brown Trail elders also hounded me, with more than one phone call from one of them, both to me and to Joe Chism [one of the Pearl St. elders], demanding a meeting of the elderships or at least with me, in attempt to force a retraction. Again, I withstood them all because I knew what Marvin wrote was the truth. While the material exposing Dave Miller's weird (and convenient) MDR position relative to Everett Chambers did not appear in *TGJ*, nonetheless, it is a part of the public record in *CFTF*. I have not kept it a secret that I believe Dave Miller is a false teacher. So, on one hand, we have the editor of *TGJ* involved in opposing Miller and unable to support AP under his direction, but on the other hand we have the President and Vice-President of *TGJ*'s Board appearing to endorse Miller by signing the "Statement of Support." This circumstance is one of apparent contradiction, as you can see, and it will doubtless become apparent to others, if it has not already. In fact, if one thinks about it very much, the appearance of yours and Joseph's names on the "support" statement implies that

brethren should ignore what *TGJ's* editor has printed about Dave Miller's conduct and doctrine. I have not discussed this seeming contradiction with other Board members, except Ken. When the news of the AP scandal first broke, several days before Miller's appointment was known, Ken talked with me about it and indicated that he does not favor even handling any more AP books when the present stock is sold. AP sent the Schertz elders a packet because the church was supporting AP on a monthly basis. Upon learning of the appointment of Dave Miller and its oblique descriptions of what had occurred involving Bert, the Schertz treasurer was instructed to cease any further support immediately. I therefore know that he cannot support AP or urge others to with Miller at its head. In the packet, Ken saw yours and Joseph's names on the support statement, of course. Ken is aware that I am writing you about these matters. What shall we do about this apparent difference of opinion in our ranks?

Your friend and brother,
Dub

Curtis Cates e-mail to Dub McClish, June 11, 2005:

Dear brother Dub:

Thank you for yesterday's email. I am answering quickly before heading to Chattanooga to start a gospel meeting in the morning at Ooltewah. I thought the meeting at Mabelvale went well. Thanks! I trust that sister Lavonne is doing well; she is constantly in our prayers.

The actions of Bert Thompson, evidently for some time, are tragic beyond description for him and his family, for those directly affected, and for the Cause of Christ. When one has a high profile and influence, the tragedy is greatly exacerbated. The way of the transgressor is indeed hard. I fear its effects will be felt for many years. I am deeply saddened about it.

When I was contacted about trying to save Apologetics Press, I had already heard about the nature of the sins of brother Thompson; however, I knew nothing of what the future organization might be. I was simply told that they were going to try to save AP, that the eldership of Palm Beach Lakes were on top of things, and that they hoped that I might be willing to sign my name to the statement you have seen. Since I did--and do--hope AP can continue as a viable work, I gave them permission to use my name.

I guess my experience in learning of the events leading up to the dismissal of Bert, etc., was different from yours. I did not get the idea that they were trying to cover up anything, although those from whom I heard used the expected discretion in discussing it. I also was told that Bert had made a confession at Panama Street, but that they deemed it expedient that discretion be used in anything going into print, especially on the internet, so that the enemies of truth [who might greatly rejoice in and get mileage from these events] might not use these things to blast those truths which have been

propagated and defended by AP. [That may explain, in part, the reticence of some to go into details, as I understand it.].

Brother Dub, several of our former students are connected with AP, Eric Lyons and Michael Cortez, men in whom I have great confidence. Relative to Dave, I cannot defend anything in which he has been involved which is wrong; I cannot do that in myself. I had been told by brother Keith Mosher that he asked brother Dave at Pulaski this year at the lectures about the re-affirmation of elders, and that Dave told him that was a "mistake." So, I take it that he would not now sanction such. [Perhaps it would be very helpful for him to make that known.]. Incidentally, several times, brother Dave has written or talked to me since he got into Montgomery, asking me what my thoughts were on...or how I would answer regarding...or what my position is on...some issue-- which I felt was very positive. But, I had no idea what his position would be at AP. I take it (according to their web site) that he is now serving as interim director. I do think that his time in Montgomery has been a growing experience for him; that is my personal impression.

I, like you, see the great need for AP, and I have great confidence in brethren Lyons and Cortez; Brad Harrub has impressed me favorably, as well as have some others connected with AP. I learned that he had been re-hired. I also have confidence in the Palm Beach Lakes elders, who oversee AP, and I have confidence in brother Frank Chesser, a trusted friend, and Panama Street, whom I have known for five decades. These things impacted my desire to help save AP, and I thought that the very fact that Dave called me and asked me to sign was positive.

Dear friend, I pray that this matter will not serve to affect adversely the loving, close relationship of those of us who serve on the Board and on the Editorial Staff of THE GOSPEL JOURNAL. "We be brethren." "This too shall pass," and we shall fight greater battles....

Godspeed, brother Dub. Sincere regards to sister Lavonne. I appreciate you.

Fraternally, Curtis

Dub McClish e-mail to Curtis Cates, June 11, 2005:

Dear Curtis:

Thanks for your prompt reply.... Please be assured that these matters have not affected my esteem and appreciation for you, and, as far as I am concerned, I trust that they will not effect my relationship with other Board Members. I hope that I said nothing in my message to you to leave the impression that they had/will. My great concerns

were/are two:

1. Dave Miller's directorship of AP.
2. More particularly, the questions some will ask about TGJ's President and Vice-president's implied endorsement of Dave Miller, whom TGJ has identified as propagating error.

I am glad to hear that Dave has sought your advice and counsel. I hate to appear overly suspicious, but what better way to deflect what was said in the pages of TGJ about him than to seek counsel from the President of TGJ's Board? Keith told me at Bristol that he had visited with Dave at Pulaski, and that Dave had said he "made a mistake" regarding the reaffirmation business. I was glad to hear that admission, but, as we both know, that which has been shouted from the housetops cannot be corrected in a corner. If possible, Dave's MDR position relative to Everett Chambers is more damning than his propagation and defense of the elder reevaluation error.

I know Eric, but not as well as you do. I know him mainly as the son of Cliff and Marty, both of whom I love dearly, of course. I have been well impressed with him also, my only slight disappointment's being that he somehow felt compelled to deny Dowell Flatt's advocacy of the Q theory when it was exposed a couple of years ago. I don't know Michael Cortez or Brad Harrub, although I have been well impressed with the things Brad has written. It seems passing strange that Brad, who has the PhD in a field of science and who (I believe) had seniority on the AP staff, would be passed over even as "Interim Executive Director" in favor of one who has a PhD in a field of religion....

I also have confidence in and appreciate Frank Chesser, who I know, but not as well or as long as you. What is so strange to me is that there seems to be almost a conspiracy, for whatever reason, among AP principals (including Frank) to reject out of hand even a consideration that accusations against Dave might have some credibility. Bert reacted extremely harshly to such, and even termed TGJ "a yellow rag" in correspondence with Marvin Weir concerning Dave's doctrinal aberrations. Frank has apparently decided to "observe the passover" concerning any such information, as well. I know he has been given such and I know that when I mentioned Dave's "baggage" two weeks ago in our phone conversation he made no response whatsoever. When Wayne Jackson and I were discussing these matters about 10 days ago, I mentioned Dave's problems without elaborating, and he simply responded that he knew nothing about any of that. In one e-mail exchange with Eric over the Flatt stuff, Eric admitted that AP had received some criticism of the hiring of Dave, but he indicated it was "very little," or words to that effect. Obviously, the AP staff dismissed all such with "a wave of the hand." I don't know any of the Palm Beach Lakes elders. However, if they allowed Bert to "talk his way out of" the homosexual charges, as Wayne Jackson put it to me—the very reason Wayne said Eastern Meadows withdrew its oversight of AP—then it seems not very likely they would listen to any accusations of "mere" doctrinal problems in their new "Executive Director." Several of us out here are nonplused concerning why brethren seem bent on defending Dave Miller. The tragedy of all of this is that, if Dave's

errors are ever fully exposed and brethren lose confidence in him, it could easily prove to be the dagger to the heart of AP. Again, I just don't understand why these brethren in charge of AP (both the board and the elders [and some of us are a bit puzzled about which of these groups really is in charge and to whom AP's operations are accountable]) seem determined to give Dave Miller a free pass.

I didn't mean to write this much. I pray for you a safe journey to and a great meeting in Chattanooga.

Your friend and brother in the greatest cause,
Dub

PS Perhaps we will know more about all of this by the time of our meeting in July.

SOME OBSERVATIONS

Note the dates on these e-mail messages: June 10–11, 2005. As soon as I saw the names of Curtis Cates and Joseph Meador on the AP "Statement of Support" list, I expressed my concern to Curtis. Curtis asked me to keep his note of June 11 confidential, and I initially agreed to do so (I edited these and a few other extraneous comments from the messages, as indicated by ellipsis dots). However, I later concluded that the right of brethren to know that he had already begun defending Dave Miller as early as June 11, 2005, superseded maintaining secrecy and shielding him from the searchlight of truth in this case. I reached this conclusion on the following bases:

1. My understanding of Jesus' teaching in Matthew 18:15–17 concerning approaching an offending brother is that, if when he is told of his fault, he repents, the matter need go no further—it should remain undisclosed. However, if he will not repent, the Lord said that the brother's offense was eventually to be told to the church. I approached Curtis in my e-mail messages concerning his name on the AP "Statement of Support," a matter in which he was culpable, letting him know that I was perplexed, confused, yea offended, by it (I believe the Lord and all right-thinking brethren were also offended by it). Had he been willing to repent of his offense, I would never have disclosed our messages. However, instead of repenting, he defended his sinful behavior. I then decided, as the Lord decreed, I should make his compromise known to "the church," hoping he might be moved thereby to repentance. Although a host of brethren have urged his repentance he has continued to deny his sinful compromise. I would have been complicit with his sin had I sought to conceal his defense of a false teacher.
2. Curtis indicated in his June 11, 2005, e-mail message to me that he did not know Dave Miller was going to be appointed the new Executive Director of AP at the time Miller solicited his name for the AP "Statement of Support." This statement implied that, had he known it, he might not have signed it. (If this was not his intended implication in saying that he did not know what the "future organization" of AP would be when he gave his name to its support, I can't imagine what he meant by it.) If Dave Miller's errors and if Miller's being appointed AP's Executive

Director had made any difference at all to Curtis, he (as any of the 60 men who signed the AP statement) could easily write and publish a disclaimer to the effect that as long as Dave Miller is at AP, he could have no fellowship with that institution and would not support it. Instead, the behavior/attitude of Curtis (and his 59 cohorts) toward Miller and AP reminds me of the Corinthians' behavior/attitude toward the incestuous brother among them, until Paul got hold of them: "And ye are puffed up, and did not rather mourn, that he that had done this deed might be taken away from among you" (1 Cor. 5:2). Would that fornicating brother have ever repented had they not rebuked and withdrawn from him? No wonder Miller has not repented. A great number of brethren have chosen to defend, endorse, and continue to use him **in spite of his error**. Would to God Paul could "get hold of" those who are so "puffed up" with their own pride that they are determined to give this erring brother a free pass.

3. Curtis revealed his initial fellowship compromise relating to Dave Miller in the fact that he was willing to converse freely and congenially with him and apparently discuss various Biblical issues and brotherhood situations with him from the time he became an employee of AP (2002). Curtis well knew all of that time (actually from many years earlier) that Miller had taught and practiced error and had been a primary factor in two major divisions in the Brown Trail congregation. However, Curtis gave no indication that he even once hinted to Dave in any of these conversations that he needed to repent. It should not have mattered whether or not Miller was Executive Director of AP. Miller's being on the staff as a writer or speaker brought Bert Thompson (who angrily defended Miller when Thompson hired Miller) and all of the other AP staff members into fellowship with him and his errors. Many brethren ceased their financial support and other avenues of fellowship with AP when Miller went there. Curtis apparently took his first step of compromise on fellowship regarding Miller in 2002 because of the two MSOP alumni who were on the staff (as mentioned in his 6/11/05 message above). He should have tried to use his influence on them to alert them to their fellowship compromises when Miller joined AP. Instead, their compromise with Miller at AP apparently influenced Curtis to compromise toward Miller and praise the two alumni. A relevant question: "Do these examples (concerning fellowship with Dave Miller) of Curtis and of the MSOP alumni who work at AP represent what MSOP students are being taught on the NT doctrine of fellowship?"
4. Note Curtis's admission of his close and trusted friendship with Frank Chesser and Panama St. in Montgomery, where the Millers, Thompsons, and other AP staff were/are members. Ironically, at the time I stated (in my 6/11/05 message to Curtis) that I had confidence in Frank Chesser, I was unaware that he was even capable of writing such a vituperative and malicious letter to anyone, as was the one he wrote to me (and circulated to "hundreds"). He dated his letter June 17, 2005, so he was conceivably already working on it at the very time I was expressing my genuine (albeit terribly misplaced) confidence in him to Curtis. As it turned out, Curtis apparently thought his vicious attack was wholly justified. Doubtless, Chesser's letter and his long-term friendship with him had considerable bearing on Curtis's turning on me with such passion. I pointed out in the meeting of the TGJ Board at which Dave Watson and I "resigned," that, by

his action, Curtis and the Board was handing my head to Frank Chesser on a silver platter.

5. Curtis's statement that he "cannot defend anything in which he [Miller] has been involved which is wrong" is utterly disingenuous. He knows (and he knows that others know) that this implication is transparently false. At the time Curtis made this statement, he knew of at least two fatal errors Miller had advocated. (He made this same statement in the presence of all of TGJ Board and Dave Watson in the meeting in which Dave Watson and I were ousted [7/20/05].) At the very time he made the statement, he had already chosen to ignore Miller's errors. Moreover, as early as September 2005, Curtis (along with the new Director of MSOP, Bobby Liddell) began **defending** Miller and claiming that the elder r/r program at Brown Trail was justified and authorized as a mere expedient. Note the information below in which I personally exposed brother Miller's errors numerous times, with which exposures Curtis was well familiar over a period of many years.
6. Although I did not know it at the time, Keith Mosher's claim that Miller had said his part in the elder r/r procedure was "a mistake" (which Moser not only told Curtis, but me and others as well) turned out to be baseless hearsay. Miller subsequently told some who called him that he does not recall making any such statement and that he would repeat the elder r/r procedure again, if necessary.

These e-mail messages were exchanged a **full five weeks** before I was forced to resign as Editor of *THE GOSPEL JOURNAL* on July 20, 2005. Curtis was present at Bellview when I delivered my lecture on the elder reaffirmation procedure in 1997, in which I implicated Dave Miller and Brown Trail (in fact we both spoke on the same day). He praised me for the lecture. Further, when we ran Marvin Weir's article in the October 2002 issue of *TGJ*, which implicated Miller and Brown Trail in a second elder reaffirmation program in April 2002, if Curtis had any criticism of that article, I never heard a word about it. One Board member (I do not recall which one) read the entire issue in advance of publication (as one did every issue) and had not the slightest objection to any of its content. The "meeting in July" referred to in my 6/11/05 PS above was scheduled in March of 2005 and was originally intended to be a relaxed and enjoyable planning meeting for all of TGJ Board and Editors. Instead, removal of *TGJ* Editors was its focus and outcome. There is no doubt in the minds of those privy to the these matters (including Michael Hatcher, TGJ Board Secretary, who resigned from the Board over my departure as Editor) that my questioning Curtis Cates about his implicit support of Dave Miller in the AP "Statement of Support" played a large part in moving Curtis to convince the Board that I must be replaced. Note his attempts to excuse and defend Dave Miller in his message of June 11 above. My questions to him concerning Dave Miller forced him to choose between Miller (and Curtis's host of friends in Montgomery, AL) and his Editor. He made it very clear in the TGJ Board meetings of July 19–20, 2005, that he valued Dave Miller and AP more than he did me. He has steadfastly defended Dave Miller ever since.

Curtis (with others) is apparently employing (as a "talking point") the assertion that I had not opposed, exposed, marked, or withdrawn from Dave Miller as a false teacher

until **after** I was ousted from *TGJ*. Brother B.J. Clark has used the date, “August 2005,” as the time at which I became so concerned with Dave Miller’s errors. He doubtless based this date on my conversation with him at Power Lectures in early August 2005, begging him to cancel his appearance on the “Polishing the Pulpit” program, which occurred the following month. His father, brother Ted Clark, told me later that he had done the same, and neither of us knew the other had done so until after the fact. As many know, B.J. rejected the pleas of both of us. While it may be true that B.J. was ignorant of my objections to Dave Miller before I thus approached him, it is not true that my appeal to him was my first expression of concern relating to Miller or that I had not previously marked him. Whether brother Clark made his statement in ignorance or not, his assertion is patently false, as the list below amply indicates. **It is beyond doubt that Curtis (and at least some others who are making this silly assertion) knows it is false:**

1. I, along with five or six others, first expressed my concerns in response to a letter from Goebel Music on **May 23, 1990, a full sixteen years** before I was ousted by TGJ Board. Goebel had witnessed the reaffirmation/ recon-firmation procedure at Brown Trail, was concerned about it, and wrote to several of us for our reaction to it. (These letters and lengthy quotes from them are documented in my chapter in the 1997 Bellview Lectureship book, *Leadership*.)
2. I then exposed the elder r/r program as practiced by Brown Trail (and marked Dave Miller for his principal part in promoting it) in my lecture at the Bellview Lectures in **June 1997, a full eight years** before July 2005.
3. As Editor of *TGJ*, I approved the article by Marvin Weir in the **October 2002** issue of *TGJ*, in which he named Dave Miller as one who approved Brown Trail’s 2002 elder reaffirmation procedure. This public marking occurred **a full three years** before TGJ Board replaced me.
4. I rejected an order for a full-page ad in *TGJ* from the Gospel Broadcasting Network in an e-mail message on **February 26, 2005**. In response, Barry Gilreath, Sr., Executive Director of GBN, inquired concerning my specific reasons for the rejection (03/07/05). I wrote a detailed response to brother Gilreath on March 17, 2005, explaining the rejections, one of which was Dave Miller and his errors. Not only did Curtis not criticize my rejection of the ad, he applauded by e-mail (3/2/05). I sent all of the correspondence in this exchange to each of TGJ Board members. Not one of them had any word of criticism of either the rejection or of my bases of rejecting the ad, including the long, detailed letter in which I pointedly referred to Dave Miller’s errors. Note that this exchange took place **almost five months** before I was replaced as Editor of *TGJ*—and Curtis knows this well. (Incidentally, Barry Gilreath, Sr., has still not responded to my March 17, 2005.)
5. As my e-mail exchange with Curtis (reproduced above) demonstrates, a **full five weeks** before I had any inkling I would be ousted as *TGJ*’s Editor, I contacted Curtis with my concerns about his implicit support of Dave Miller, only to see Curtis defend Miller in his reply.
6. Consistent with my marking and exposure of Dave Miller **before** I left *TGJ*, I have continued to oppose and expose Dave Miller’s errors **since** departing *TGJ*.

Curtis is the one who has changed in his attitude toward Dave Miller. Here are the facts of the matter: Until the AP scandal broke (upon which Dave Miller was elevated to Executive Director as Bert Thompson's replacement), Curtis apparently realized that Dave Miller had involved himself in erroneous doctrine and practice, of which he had not repented. Curtis therefore rightly agreed with every exposure of Dave Miller's errors of which I am aware. The "tipping point" for Curtis regarding Dave Miller came when Curtis's loyalty to AP (and some of his ex-students who are AP employees and friends, such as Frank Chesser) clouded his concept of Truth, error, and fellowship. In order to support AP he was forced to accept an impenitent false teacher as its director. For more than a year now, Curtis has not only accepted Dave Miller, but he has defended him. Had I decided to sweep Miller's errors under the rug and hop on the AP bandwagon, doubtless I would still be Editor of *TGJ*. I repeat: Curtis is the one who has changed his attitude toward Dave Miller and his errors; I have not.

—Dub McClish
March 27, 2007