

HIGHER “CHRISTIAN” EDUCATION— WHAT SHOULD YOU EXPECT YOUR CHILD TO BE TAUGHT?

By Dub McClish

Introduction

In his helpful, but obsolete book on the history of “Christian Colleges” (1836–1949), the late M. Norvel Young astutely observed:

Two fundamental dangers recognized by students of the Christian college movement are these: The schools might become organically united with the church, which would not be after the New Testament pattern, and thus gradually dominate the church. On the other hand there is the danger that there may develop too wide a gulf between the schools and the church and that the schools may not be kept close to the fundamental principles which the Bible teaches (33).

Brethren who have been paying attention over the past several years are aware of the significance and relevance of both of the foregoing threats. In addition to these dangers, we suggest a third, growing out of Young’s aforementioned second, namely that schools that go astray from “the fundamental principles” will be defended regardless of their departures and will take many congregations with them into apostasy. This danger, anticipated by at least one sage brother in the nineteenth century, is quite evident and prevalent in our time. In 1899, after observing the half-century-plus record of colleges established and operated by brethren, F.D. Srygley wrote in *The Gospel Advocate*:

Instead of robust individuality in Bible study and independent vigor in faith, people accept the doctrine promulgated from the schools, even though it is contrary to what seems to them to be the plain teaching of the Bible. They gradually come to have more confidence in the dictum of the schools than in their own understanding of the Bible. This gives the schools the power, and sometimes creates in them the disposition and desire to “lord it over God’s heritage” (West, 2:384).

That all of the schools (including “preacher training” schools, colleges, universities, and graduate schools) were initially founded in order to have a strong influence on brethren, and therefore on the churches of which they were members, is apparent on the surface. This effect on congregations is commendable as long as (and only as long as) a school remains true to the Faith. However, when a school abandons its chartered purpose(s) and begins to tolerate and/or champion error, its strong influence on congregations does not diminish; it becomes a force for evil and error rather than for righteousness and Truth. I charge that the schools have become a dominant force for error and apostasy in hundreds, if not thousands, of congregations, over the past three decades. This tide of influence has resulted in irreparable apostasy in many cases and in doctrinal softness and fellowship compromises in even more.

Gargantuan changes have occurred in such schools since Young wrote his book—changes that have included the demise of some and the founding of others, expansive building programs and enrollment increases in almost all of them. Far more significant, however, are the dramatic changes in the philosophical and doctrinal direction of all of these extant schools. The steady, relentless leftward movement of the schools founded and operated by our brethren is undeniable except to those who are pathetically ignorant, pitifully biased, or patently dishonest—or all three.

The most difficult challenges of discussing the topic of this chapter are to decide where to begin, where to end, and what to include/omit in between. The volume of material relating to this subject is enormous. It spans almost two centuries and many generations, and it involves numerous institutions, their founders, and their successors.

This history is available from an assortment of documents (e.g., various school publications and Websites, speeches by professors and administrators, letters, articles written about the schools, books with relevant material, etc.).

We will study the subject of this chapter under the following major headings:

- The Troubled Early History of Higher “Christian” Education
- The Aims of the Founders of the Schools
- What Faithful Christian Parents Have a Right To Expect
- What Higher “Christian” Education Is Delivering and Has Produced

The Troubled Early History of Higher “Christian” Education

Interest in advanced educational institutions among those sounding forth the plea for primitive Christianity in the early nineteenth century manifested itself early on and has remained constant. Small, isolated schools and academies began as early as 1818, when Alexander Campbell began “Buffalo Seminary” in his Bethany, Virginia, mansion. By the 1830s, Campbell and others were thinking in more serious terms about higher educational enterprises in which the Bible would be taught as part of the curriculum for all students. I deem it worthwhile to visit in some detail a brief history of the earliest attempt to establish such schools, the outcome of these efforts, and the concerns they raised among brethren at the time.

On the one hand, Campbell and others eschewed any concept of schools that smacked of denominational theological seminaries. Commenting on the possibility of establishing colleges operated by brethren, Campbell warned in 1836:

Those schools called Schools of Theology, have very generally, if not universally, filled the world with idle speculations, doctrinal errors, and corruptions of all sorts, terminating in discords and heresies innumerable (“Remarks,” 201).

Campbell was nonetheless eager to see colleges operated by brethren in which they could teach the Bible along with the arts and sciences in the regular curriculum, then unheard of in any other schools except theological seminaries. Later that year, Campbell argued his view of the matter:

I trust it does already appear that there can be no good reason offered against Christians being the patrons of literature, being the patrons of schools and colleges, and having them under their direction and control.... Of all people in the world we ought then to be, according to our means, the greatest patrons of schools and colleges ("Literary," 377).

That same year, the first such school founded by the restorers, **Bacon College** (named for Sir Francis Bacon), held its first sessions in Georgetown, Kentucky (antedating the beginning of Campbell's Bethany College by four years). Three years later it moved to Harrodsburg, but by 1845 lack of financial support from brethren had almost forced its closing. The reason given for this decline is revealing and pertinent to our topic. Perceptive brethren argued that the Kentucky saints were withholding their support **because Bacon College was not serving the cause for which brethren established it** (West 1:273). In response, James Shannon, Bacon's president, defended the direction of the school by stating that (1) its charter stipulated that the school was not to teach the doctrines of any particular "sect" and (2) it was simply teaching the Bible rather than the "doctrines of the churches of Christ," implying that he conceived of the church as a "sect" (does this sound familiar?). This may have been the first time brethren in that era heard a **brother** refer to the church as a "sect."

By 1850, lack of funds and enrollment forced Bacon College to close, but the property and its board remained intact. In 1852, brethren in Kentucky met and decided to revive the school, but with a revised charter specifically stating that the school would belong to "Christians in the state of Kentucky" (West, 1:274). Nothing came from this effort until 1855, when John Bowman, a member of Bacon's original board, suggested the reincarnation of Bacon College as a university. His plans were approved and he raised sufficient funds for the enterprise. The board drafted a new charter calling for a self-perpetuating board of thirty "curators," two-thirds of whom were to be members of the church in Kentucky. Brethren trusted that this provision would insure the proper direction of the school so that they could send their children (and their money) there without qualms. Accordingly, **Kentucky University** (which is the modern University of Kentucky), held its first classes in 1859. When a fire destroyed its main building in 1864, the school moved to Lexington, merging with Transylvania University, and began its first classes in what became its permanent location on October 2, 1865.

By the time the school moved to Lexington, brethren had again begun to lose confidence in its direction under Bowman, as they had earlier under Shannon—and for the same reason.

Brethren had principally funded the school and believed it belonged to them (although Bowman's promotional talents had attracted endowment and operational funds from outside sources, including the state). They expected it to stand for, promote, and advance the cause of Christ, but they saw ominous signs that it was not doing so. Earl West described the situation as follows:

Bowman had gathered around him a Board of Curators largely imbibed [sic] with his own educational ideas. ... Their language, clothed as it was with the verbiage long familiar to the brotherhood, caused considerable misunderstanding. Both Bowman and the Curators claimed they were running a university on "non-sectarian" principles. The brotherhood breathed a sigh of relief. But they were soon to learn that the connotation of "non-sectarian" was not necessarily fixed. Bowman conceived of the churches of Christ as another sect. Instead of making Kentucky University be sympathetic toward their cause, he would conceive of a school that would serve equally as well the denominations (2:115).

Bowman's theological double-speak, using old words in new ways, is not unlike liberal tacticians of our time. Kentucky University moved ever more to the left. Even the efforts of the influential J.W. McGarvey to salvage at least the University's **College of the Bible** would at last prove unsuccessful. Bowman forced McGarvey's resignation from its faculty in 1873, upon which occasion McGarvey tartly commented:

The purpose long cherished in the heart of John B. Bowman has at last been accomplished. Mordecai no longer sits at the king's gate refusing to bow down when the great Haman goes in and out (West, 2:120).

The College of the Bible was eventually severed completely from Kentucky University, KU's becoming a state institution and passing totally from the control of brethren who had established it and principally financed it. As the lines between those pushing for and those resisting instrumental music in worship and the missionary society became ever clearer as the turn of the century neared, the digressives gained complete control of the College of the Bible. On its centennial in 1965, the Disciples changed its name to Lexington Theological Seminary, under which it still operates, churning out liberals and modernists to fill pulpits of the Disciples churches.

The same fate befell Campbell's beloved **Bethany College**, a rather predictable fate in light of his strong advocacy of the missionary society. Those who love the Truth, who owe so much to Campbell, and who so greatly admire so much of his work overall and his aim in establishing Bethany, visit its campus today with broken hearts. The ultra-liberal Disciples of Christ Christian Church continues its control and operation of both of these schools, and thus for well over a century they have been tearing down the Truth and the Cause their founders spent their energies and money to propagate and strengthen.

The battle over control of the College of the Bible in the 1870s provoked B.F. Leonard to write a series of letters that were published in *The Gospel Advocate*. In these letters, he raised what have proved to be some prescient observations, cautions, and concerns about “Bible colleges” and how easily they can be misappropriated and diverted from the intent of their founders. His criticisms of and questions about such schools (as ours) did not arise from questioning the Scriptural authority for their existence (as ours do not), of which position Daniel Sommer would make a career several years later.

Rather, Leonard’s questions arose from more pragmatic observations and concerns, based on the “nature of the beast”: “One charge that I have to bring against them is that...they are worldly. Like all other colleges, they are founded on money, not on the Bible” (West, 2:124). Leonard’s point was that, because they must ever seek money and patronage, their success depends upon courting the favor of the world. He alleged that, in times of crisis, they could be counted on to take the most popular side, regardless of what was right. To prove his point, he asked what the colleges had done to check the avalanche of innovations and answered that either they were all silent or they outright championed the errors. Of the schools of his day, Leonard prophesied: “Their abuses may not yet be plainly manifested, but they will surely show themselves in all their deformity” (West, 2:124). In this case, we could have wished him to be a false prophet, but, alas, he was not.

Daniel Sommer had entered Bethany as a young man in 1869, only three years following Campbell’s death. By then, Campbell’s son-in-law, the weak and compromising W.K. Pendleton, was its president and missionary society advocates were in control. With these kinds of influences, it would drift increasingly each year from Campbell’s aim in establishing it. Sommer was disillusioned with the school, particularly with the attitude he found in Pendleton, which he described as a sincerity-alone approach of “love God and do as you please” (West, 2:297). He remained at Bethany only three years, leaving without graduating. As noted earlier, Campbell did not envision Bethany as a school to educate preachers, despising the very concept of theological seminaries. In 1888, reflecting on his tenure at Bethany, Sommer alleged that Bethany had become just that, and worse than that, was training men to oppose the restoration concept which Campbell so powerfully championed:

Colleges for educating preachers have proved to be perverting schools among disciples of Christ. When the corner stone of Bethany College was laid, the foundation for another clergy was begun, and thus it was that a revolutionist established the institution which tends to destroy his revolutionary work... (West, 2:394).

Another prominent voice that later joined the outcry against “Bible colleges” was the legendary Texas preacher of a century ago, J.D. Tant. He mistakenly alleged that they were “owned” and “operated” by the church, failing to recognize that their ownership and operation was by individual Christians. However, his observation, written in 1910, concerning the influence of the schools up to that time is interesting, indeed: “Church colleges have been the hot-bed of innovations, and have led all churches from their original ground without exception” (West, 3:240).

Those in our time who are determined to stand for the Truth have reactions and concerns similar to those our nineteenth-century brethren experienced relative to “Christian” universities. The uneasiness that brethren felt concerning the direction and emphasis of Bacon College, its successor, and Bethany College is the uneasiness many of us have felt for several years, to one degree or another, concerning every University our brethren operate nowadays. We experience the resentment and outrage brethren of those early days experienced when the schools they established and funded were stolen from them. Those who in recent decades have redirected and purloined, one by one, the schools founded by faithful saints are barely less betrayers of the Son of God than Judas Iscariot.

We have difficulty disagreeing with Leonard’s observations above to the effect that such schools by nature of having to curry favor, patronage, and funds seem predisposed eventually to veer to the left so as to be lost to the cause. Likewise, we see in Sommer’s allegation about Bethany a description of the universities operated by brethren today: They are tearing down the very Biblical principles their founders sought to strengthen and solidify in their establishment. While faithful saints today find much to agree with in Sommer’s observation concerning what we now call “Christian education,” he unfortunately could not separate in his mind the **abuse** of an authorized practice from the authorized practice itself. He thus objected to the very concept of a Bible college, not merely the abuse of its purpose. He (and many others) thus made a crucial mistake in regard to his opposition to the schools.

Schools have for centuries secured “endowment” funds, which become their financial “nest egg.” The principal of these funds is invested, and the school uses interest or dividends earned on the principal for such things as equipment and land acquisition and building construction, which could not be funded from tuition and other student fees. Wikipedia makes the following interesting observation about the implications of such endowment income for universities in general:

As the endowment’s reinvestment starts becoming a larger part of its growth, the need for happy students and alumni to donate funds to the university’s budget and endowment is

reduced. Therefore, traditional market forces that provide incentives to run a university efficiently may be greatly reduced and at least theoretically lead to university administration not being held accountable for its actions (emph. DM).

By soliciting and receiving such endowments from sources other than brethren, administrators of the early schools were willing to make compromises. As these funds from outside sources (and from liberal brethren) increased, the school administrators felt less and less the need to answer to faithful brethren. The practice of accumulating endowments from sources unconcerned with Biblical roots and boundaries and the repercussions of doing so is clearly evident in the apostasy of schools currently operated by brethren. This phenomenon has played a major part in the loss of these institutions to the Cause of Truth.

Franklin College and its founder took a different approach. Named after the Revolutionary era patriot, Benjamin Franklin, the school welcomed its first students on January 1, 1845. Tolbert Fanning conceived, planned, built, and operated this college on his farm, six miles southeast of Nashville, Tennessee. He, like the founders of Bacon College and like Campbell, desired to operate a college in which the Bible would be studied and accentuated, rather than ignored and/or outright disdained as in other colleges generally. Also, like Campbell, his aim was not to educate preachers, but to provide a good education that included Bible courses for students regardless of their career plans. However, as with Bacon and Bethany, several boys who studied there spent their lives in preaching and teaching God's Word.

Franklin was forced to discontinue operation with the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, but reopened in the fall of 1865. About three weeks after resuming operations, the main building, which housed its library and laboratory equipment, burned, and the brethren in the impoverished South were unable to fund a rebuilding program, which meant the demise of the school. Perhaps the most historically familiar alumni of Franklin's sixteen-year run were the illustrious David Lipscomb and T.B. Larimore.

Fanning had a different (and unusual, for his time and ours) philosophy on funding his college, with which David Lipscomb later agreed. He did not seek any endowment for Franklin College. In fact, he argued against endowments for colleges established and operated by brethren. While Campbell wrote words generally encouraging and endorsing Fanning and Franklin College, he strongly demurred on Fanning's attitude toward endowment funds. After mentioning that Franklin College was not endowed, he commented:

It asks for aid to get up its buildings, and will have no fund. In this, it is, in our opinion, and in the history of all Colleges, decidedly in error. Not a college in the world has existed one century without endowment; nor can they.... Can any one name a college that has seen one century without other funds than the fees of tuition? ("Colleges," 420).

As noted above, as Kentucky University increasingly attracted funding from sources outside the church, it proportionately felt less dependent upon its compatibility with and approval of faithful brethren. West commented as follows on the reaction of Fanning and Lipscomb to this demonstrable peril:

It was the realization of this danger that had led Tolbert Fanning and David Lipscomb to advocate that schools have no endowment and that they might die upon the death of their founders. Men would give money to richly endow a school and after they died, the money would be used to destroy the very thing they had tried to erect (2:116–17, emph. DM).

In light of the two disparate approaches noted above, both of which were matters of mere human opinion, it is clear that, in spite of Campbell's genius in so many ways, he erred in this matter. He appears to have misplaced his priorities relative to the existence of the colleges. As indicated from his insistence on the endowment of the schools, he was greatly concerned about their longevity, failing to consider the possibility that such would be a curse if a school departed from the faith. Fanning and Lipscomb clearly outthought Campbell in this case, realizing not only that a school could operate for several years and be a great ally to the church (Fanning's aim for Franklin), However, they also foresaw that, sooner or later, every school's control must be relinquished by its founder(s) to others.

Campbell got his endowment for Bethany, and even before his passing, forces were already at work that would, in only a few years, render it a prime source of doctrinal corruption. Its endowment has allowed it to continue thus for almost a century and a half. While one at first may be tempted to lament the brevity of Franklin College's existence, it was ever faithful to Fanning's Biblical soundness. It did not survive to drift away from the Truth and serve as a vehicle to destroy the very purpose for which it was founded. Had it been perpetuated with an endowment, it likely would have followed the same destructive path that all such schools eventually seem destined to follow.

The foregoing brief history gives us a snapshot of some of the attitudes brethren had toward "higher" educational institutions in the earliest days of such schools. It also enables us to see what some of the schools soon came to be and the anxieties and cautions these developments raised in brethren who loved the Truth.

The Aims of the Founders of the Schools

Material in the previous section revealed in a general way the aims of the founders of the earliest schools, such as Bacon, Bethany, and Franklin Colleges. While the charters of the above-named schools were not available to us, it is evident from the brief sketches we have provided that they were begun to promote and perpetuate sound Bible teaching and that faithful

brethren who established and supported these schools expected them to adhere to this aim. We were able to gain access to enough of the deeds, charters, and/or relevant quotations of their founders of some of the schools that were begun in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. We now turn to these to see the specific wording of some of these documents.

Ever since the loss of the confidence of many brethren in Bethany College and the College of the Bible and the demise of Franklin College in 1865, there had been a need for a new school to serve brethren in the Deep South. Accordingly, in 1891, David Lipscomb, longtime Editor of *The Gospel Advocate*, announced his plans to begin a “Bible school” in Nashville, Tennessee. **Nashville Bible School** began inauspiciously that year in a rented house with six enrollees and three teachers on its first day, but before the term was over, enrollment had swelled to fifty-three. Lipscomb set out his aim for the school in no uncertain terms:

It is proposed to open a school in Nashville, in September next, under safe and competent teachers in which the Bible, excluding all human opinions and philosophy, as the only rule of faith and practice; and the appointments of God, as ordained in the scriptures, excluding all innovations and organizations of men, as the fullness of divine wisdom, for converting sinners and perfecting saints, will be earnestly taught. The aim is to teach the Christian religion as represented in the Bible in its purity and fullness... (West, 2:375).

By 1893, the school had prospered sufficiently to justify the purchase of property. Lipscomb and two other brethren formed a board of trustees for this purchase. The deed for this initial purchase was clear about the intended use of the property, reflecting the increasingly heated controversy over the instrumental music and society issues:

That the property shall be used for maintaining a school in which, in addition to other branches of learning, the Bible as the recorded will of God and the only standard of faith and practice in religion, excluding all human systems and opinions and all innovations, inventions and devices of men from the service and worship of God, shall be taught as a regular daily study to all who shall attend said school, and for no other purpose inconsistent with this object, this condition being herein inserted at the request of the founders of the proposed Bible School, the same is hereby declared fundamental and shall adhere to the premises conveyed as an imperative restriction upon their use so long as the same shall be owned by said Bible School, or its trustees, and to any and all property which may be purchased with the proceeds of said premises in case of sale or reinvestment, as hereinafter provided.... All trustees shall be members of the church of Christ, in full sympathy with the teachings set forth above, and willing to see that they are carried out. Any one failing to have these qualifications shall resign or be removed. (West, 2:381).

Nashville Bible School continued to prosper without interruption into the new century. When Lipscomb died in 1917, the faculty petitioned the board of the school to honor Lipscomb’s accomplishments by renaming it “**David Lipscomb College.**” It became **David Lipscomb University** in 1988, and more recently has adopted “**Lipscomb University**” (LU) as its name.

David Lipscomb and his associates who founded Nashville Bible School/Lipscomb University were unambiguous and unapologetic about their sound intent for their school. Those who have followed this university's relentless defection from the old paths over the past few decades are acutely aware of the wide chasm between its present direction and the stellar safeguards its venerable founder thought he had devised for its perpetual faithfulness.

James A. Harding, a graduate of Bethany College, co-founded Nashville Bible School with David Lipscomb, and Harding directed and supervised it for its first ten years. He was then invited to begin a similar school near Bowling Green, Kentucky, which he did, naming it **Potter Bible College** after its major benefactors. Harding modeled Potter after Nashville Bible School, including making the Bible the heart of its curriculum, which involved the study of the Bible daily by each student and compulsory student attendance at a daily religious chapel assembly, led by the faculty (Young, 114–15). Although Potter lasted only thirteen years, it provided the stimulus and inspiration that resulted in the beginning of several other such schools in the early twentieth century.

About the same time Potter Bible College was getting underway successfully in Kentucky, brethren in Texas were also getting the "Bible college fever." In 1903, a small group of brethren in Gunter, a new Texas town seventy miles north of Dallas, determined to begin a Bible college. We include a reference to the short-lived (and relatively minor) **Gunter Bible College** because the wording of its original charter is so illustrative of the scrupulous care the founders of these schools, especially those begun at the turn of the century, exercised to insure that they would begin and continue in faithful adherence to the Bible. The Gunter charter is also significant because it became a model after which more than one other school patterned their charters. Article II is of special significance. In reference to the forming of a corporation for the college, the article stated:

The corporation is created for the following purposes—to wit: The establishment and maintenance of a college for the advancement of education in which the arts, sciences, languages, and Holy Scriptures shall always be taught, together with such other courses of instruction as shall be deemed advisable by the Board of Directors, ...each of whom shall be a member of a congregation of the church of Christ, which takes the New Testament as its only and sufficient rule of faith, worship, and practice, and rejects from its faith, worship, and practice everything not required by either precept or example, and which does not introduce into the faith, worship, and practice, as a part of the same or as adjuncts thereto, any supplemental organization or anything else not clearly and directly authorized in the New Testament either by precept or example (Young, 218).

N.L. Clark, a member of the original board of trustees, also served as its first president, in which post he continued for the first ten years of the school's existence. He was of the anti-

Bible class, anti-woman teacher, and anti-literature persuasion, and he greatly influenced the school in this direction. A few months after Gunter opened its doors, a would-be donor offered his support on the condition that the school would oppose “Sunday schools” and women teachers in the church. Accordingly, the board, with some opposition, adopted a resolution listing as “unscriptural” the use of printed literature other than the Bible, women teachers, and divided classes in church meetings. This unfortunate and extreme position did not have enough adherents among brethren in Texas to support the school, eventually resulting in its demise in 1928. The adoption of this proposition in the interest of financial support well illustrates the reason B.F. Leonard leveled his charge in the 1870s that such schools are “founded on money.”

J.N. Armstrong, James A. Harding’s son-in-law, was a product of Nashville Bible School and taught in Potter Bible College. He became a prime mover in the proliferation of “Bible Colleges,” beginning in 1905, serving as president of several of them. History indicates that Armstrong’s expression of intent and zeal for such schools is representative of the aim of the founders of all such schools. Writing of his work in these schools and in anticipation of beginning a new one, he wrote in 1904:

I consider it the greatest line of work now being done by the disciples of Jesus. After these years of experience, I do not hesitate to say that there is no other work known to me for which I would rather sacrifice. I do not know of a work into which means can be put that will more directly, rapidly and lastingly build up the Kingdom of God than in a school like we desire to establish. I think I would rather beg for bread and do this work than to fare sumptuously ever day, but be deprived of it. It also makes me grateful and humble to know that all the brethren who enter this new field with me thus love the work, and are glad to sacrifice their lives for it (West, 3:234).

Let us not overlook the references to sacrifice in Armstrong’s statement. One has to read but little of the history of these early schools to see the degree of hardship and self-denial these hardy souls underwent in order to bring these schools into existence and keep them in operation.

Harding University dates from 1924 when some of these small schools with which Armstrong had been associated merged, relocated in Morrilton, Arkansas, and adopted the new name, “Harding College,” in honor of James A. Harding. The school moved to Searcy, Arkansas in 1934 and became Harding University in 1979. The “Articles of Agreement and Incorporation of Harding College” clearly demonstrate how carefully its original board sought to insure its perpetual Biblical soundness, as seen in Article V, Section 1:

The said college and institution of learning shall be under the management, direction and control of a Board of Trustees to be composed of not less than seven (7) nor more than thirteen (13) persons, each of whom shall be of legal adult age, a member of the Church of Christ in good standing, who believes in and adheres to a strict construction of the Bible and

who opposes all innovations in the work and worship of the Church, such as instruments of music, missionary societies, Christian endeavor societies, all other human inventions not authorized by the Word of God; and no person shall be qualified to act as trustee whose religious belief, faith or practice is not in conformity with the provisions and qualifications set out in this paragraph (Young, 121).

Armstrong served as Harding's founding president until 1936. Each of the schools he had a part in founding and/or presiding over bore the earmarks of daily instruction in the Bible. It is tragic to observe how far this university has drifted from observing a "strict construction of the Bible," as we will subsequently demonstrate.

A.B. Barret attended Nashville Bible School at the dawn of the twentieth century, where David Lipscomb and James A. Harding greatly inspired his interest in the value of Bible colleges. Soon after moving to Texas, he became convinced of the need for such a school in the western part of the state. In 1906, members of the church and other citizens in Abilene offered financial support for his dream. W.H. Childers made a sizable donation and was given the privilege of naming the school, which he called "Childers Classical Institute." The school began offering college level courses in 1912, and in 1919 the school's name was changed to **Abilene Christian College**. The college became **Abilene Christian University** (ACU) in 1976.

The same year Childers Classical Institute opened its doors, the U.S. Religious Census documented the culmination of the brotherhood split that had begun a half century earlier, spawned by the introduction of musical instruments in worship and a missionary society in evangelism. While we were not able to locate a copy of the school's original charter, we were able to find excerpts of some of its important provisions that reflect the fellowship crisis created by the innovators. Douglas Foster, though a liberal professor of church history at ACU (does it have any other kind?) and blatantly sympathetic with all things and persons liberal (including fellowshiping his "brethren" in the Christian Churches), nevertheless openly informs us of the intent and effort of the school's faithful founders to protect the school from apostasy. He notes that the original charter of November 3, 1906, required that every trustee must be a member of the Church of Christ. Moreover, said trustees were not to be identified with a congregation that merely carried "Church of Christ" as its designation, but one

...which takes the New Testament as its only sufficient rule of faith, worship and practice, and rejects from its faith, worship and practice everything not required by either precept or example (Foster, 1).

According to the 1906–1907 *Childers Classical Institute Catalogue*, the school's charter relied heavily upon the 1903 Charter of Gunter Bible College. A comparison of the quotation from the aforementioned document with that of the Childers charter demonstrates its exact dependence on the Gunter charter regarding the spiritual safeguards for the school. It is a

profound irony that ACU has for some years been in the forefront of directly rejecting and reversing the intent of its founders and charter as it welcomes with open arms both versions of the Christian Church denomination with their multiplied innovations and heresies—the very things from which its founders sought to shield it.

George Pepperdine made a fortune in the first third of the twentieth century by founding the Western Auto Supply Stores. In seeking places to use his wealth for the advancement of the Truth, this dedicated brother was persuaded to found **George Pepperdine College** in Los Angeles, California, in 1937. Pepperdine was chairman of the original board and served in that capacity for the school's first twenty years (Rushford, 593). The college attained university status in 1971, adopting **Pepperdine University** as its new name.

Brother Pepperdine was a faithful Christian with noble purpose in founding his namesake school. As with all of the other schools, its movement away from his aim has constituted a reversal of the purpose from that of its founder and initial funder. While specifying that the college bearing his name was not connected with the church and that it would not solicit funds from churches, he and his fellow board members stated that the school would place “emphasis on Christian living and fundamental Christian faith.” Furthermore, the articles of incorporation required that “each of the trustees must be a member in good standing of the Churches of Christ” (Young, 191). In his “founder’s statement” speech at the formal opening ceremony he unequivocally laid out what he thought he was buying with his great wealth in endowing George Pepperdine College. Among other things, he said:

The heart of man usually grows to be perverse unless trained by the influence of God’s Word. If we educate a man’s mind and improve his intellect with all the scientific knowledge men have discovered and do not educate the heart by bringing it under the influence of God’s Word, that man is dangerous.... Therefore, as my contribution to the well being and happiness of this generation and those who follow, I am endowing this institution to help young men and women to prepare themselves for a life of usefulness in this competitive world and to help them build a foundation of Christian character and faith which will survive the storms of life.... All instruction is to be under conservative, fundamental Christian supervision with stress upon the importance of strict Christian living (Young, 193).

Those conversant with the influence and history of the colleges founded by brethren in the twentieth century are aware that, contrary to its founder’s stated aims, Pepperdine University has come to represent the opposite of *conservative* and *fundamental* in its influence.

These sample statements of the founders and/or founding charters of several schools brethren have established are demonstrably representative of the aims and intents of all of them, including those that have not and those that have survived the challenges of the ensuing years. We may encapsulate those aims as the desire to:

1. Teach young people the Bible daily, along with a daily secular education
2. Exalt the Bible as the infallible Word of God, emphasizing its inspiration and authority, free of human innovation, philosophy, extremism, or sectarianism
3. Fortify and reinforce the faith of young people, preparing them to be strong citizens in the kingdom of God as they prepared to become citizens in society
4. Thereby prepare young people to teach others the Gospel and strengthen the church wherever they might live

We will subsequently document how most of these institutions of higher learning operated by brethren have so overwhelmingly failed to abide by these aims. We charge that they have jettisoned both the intent of their founders and the founding documents of their respective schools. More than that, the basis of such abandonment has been their repudiation of the Son of God and His authority as expressed in His Word (John 12:48).

What Should Faithful Christian Parents Expect Their Children To Be Taught in These Institutions of Higher Learning?

By “faithful Christian parents,” we have in mind those who are generally well versed in the Bible and who respect its authority. These would likewise be parents who have some knowledge of brotherhood currents and issues and who realize and are deeply concerned about the great inroads of liberalism and compromise in the church over the past few decades. They do not want their children to be swept away by these elements.

Before considering the expectations of faithful parents, however, let us consider some other categories of “Christian parents.” The church today is composed of a multitude of “nominal Christians,” among whom are many parents. In stark contrast with the aforementioned faithful Christians, such parents know little of the Scriptures and less about the rampant malignancy of liberalism that increasingly afflicts the church. Parents of this sort apparently have a simplistic confidence that the aforementioned institutions and their academic sisters will provide their children with an environment that will strengthen their faith and increase their love for the Lord, His Word, and His church as they prepare to take their places in the world.

Biblical ignorance and apostasy are at least first cousins, if not more closely related. The liberalism that, to a greater or lesser degree, has captured hundreds of congregations (including the vast majority of those numbering two hundred or more members) has been able to make such great inroads only because of rife Biblical ignorance among brethren. This ignorance has worked to the advantage of the school administrators who are bold and aggressive liberals, allowing them to stamp their influence on the schools they control.

To be fair, some administrators were/are not such active change agents, but have nevertheless allowed themselves to be swept evermore leftward with the current. The schools they operate have naturally moved in the same compromising direction, only not as swiftly and radically (at present) as those with radical, agenda-driven administrators. At whatever degree of liberalism a given school has arrived, general Biblical ignorance among brethren has been a great contributor to said arrival.

Also, to be fair, we must call attention to the culpability of the trustees, as well as to that of the administrators of these schools. The board of trustees of any institution is charged with seeing that its charter is fulfilled. The charter is the school's constitution. The charter's articles define the school's purpose, direction, and aims as well as the provisions for guarding and preserving same. Trustees, by definition, are entrusted with the serious business of seeing that their respective schools are operated according to their charters. Trustees employ administrators (i.e., presidents, chancellors) and delegate to them the responsibility of the daily operation of the school. Administrators employ the faculty.

When an instructor apostatizes, administrators have the responsibility to remove him if he will not repent. If the administrator fails or refuses to make the correction, the trustees then have the responsibility to call their administrator to account. If the administrator refuses to carry out their will, the trustees will replace him if they are true to that which is entrusted to them. The proverbial "buck" stops with them. If they fail to so act, they are derelict in their duty, failing in their primary obligation. Schools have embraced and are disseminating liberalism, not merely because they have some liberal teachers and administrators, but because compromising (if not outright liberal) trustees now occupy seats on these boards.

Even in cases where trustees may not be rank liberals, one gets the distinct impression that most of them have been appointed more because of their personal wealth and/or business acumen than their knowledge of the Bible and their depth of dedication to the old paths. Their eyes apparently are primarily on financial "bottom lines," increasing enrollments, and erecting buildings. Faithfulness to Scripture has fallen somewhere further down the priority list. In some cases, it appears that the trustees are little more than figureheads who are all too willing to rubber stamp whatever their administrator sets before them, regardless of the mandate of the school charter. In what other way can one explain how error has captured, to one degree or another, all of the schools our brethren operate?

B.F. Leonard's words from the 1870s, quoted earlier, ring hauntingly true as we study these matters: "One charge that I have to bring against them ["Bible colleges"] is that...they are

worldly. Like all other colleges, they are founded on money, not on the Bible.” Although Leonard overstated the case in saying they are not founded “on the Bible” (we’ve seen that all of them were), sooner or later the need for money has become a cruel master that demands submission above all others.

It is good to have men wise about matters of commerce on boards that handle vast sums of money (and that never cease to beg for more). However, surely it must be possible to find enough men who know and will stand for the Truth without compromise, but who also know how to manage money. Although there is enough “blame to go around,” ultimately, the sad spiritual condition of the schools must be blamed on their boards of trustees. Some have failed so miserably to maintain the requirements of their charters that, if someone had the money and the courage to file suit, such boards might be found liable in the courts for malfeasance regarding their trust.

In the vein of the hypnotic serpent, “Kaa,” from the classic children’s movie, *Jungle Book*, the schools for at least two generations have enchantingly sung, “Trust in me, just in me...” Like young Mowgli before Kaa, unsuspecting, spiritually naïve, and stupefied parents have fallen under their spell, sending them their children and their money without question or concern. Fortunately, Mowgli, with some help, “snapped out of it” in time to escape. Unfortunately, many ho-hum, nominal Christian parents and their children are sucked in by the siren song of the schools to buy their children a “Christian education,” and they scoff at those of us who try to awaken them to what the schools have become.

Parents thus continue to offer up their children to these institutions by the thousands as sacrificial lambs. When their children come home declaring that the church is just another denomination in the “invisible church,” instrumental music in worship is merely a matter of conscience or opinion, and baptism may be either because-of or in-order-to-receive remission of sins, they should not be surprised (assuming this class of parents would even notice or be concerned). Nor should they be shocked if their youngsters leave these schools with doubts about such fundamental doctrines as the Genesis account of creation, the virgin conception and birth of Jesus, and the verbal inspiration and infallibility of the Bible. Perhaps some of these parents are such spiritual pygmies that they view these “different” convictions in their children (which equal a loss of their faith) as minor considerations. “After all,” they seem to reason, “Was it not brethren—‘scholars’ no less—in the Bible and in other disciplines, who taught them? Who are we to question them?”

Yet another class of parents exists with its own expectations of the schools. These are parents who themselves are dedicated liberals and who are cheering on every effort of the change agents. Parents such as these in many cases are themselves products of one of these schools where they lost their faith in fundamental matters. They have helped apply pressure to administrators to move their schools ever more leftward. They conceive of the church as a denomination and they favor the broadening of fellowship; they want their children to be confirmed in these and similar heresies. They therefore relish the liberal campus atmosphere and have only praise for heretical professors and administrators who defend and promote them. To such parents, liberalism, compromise, and open fellowship constitute “real Christianity.” They therefore rejoice in the availability of such schools that are operated by brethren. These parents have no problem finding schools controlled by brethren where their expectations will be fully satisfied. They expect and desire a liberal emphasis, and most of the schools are delivering in every respect.

Now, let us return to a consideration of faithful Christian parents. What should **they** expect their children to be taught in schools operated by brethren? By this question we refer to **what they have a right to expect**. Previously, we documented statements of various brethren who founded and/or served as administrators in the early history of several of the schools. We also quoted from some of the legal documents (e.g., deeds, charters) that were drafted so as to make the intentions of the founders unmistakable regarding respect for Biblical authority in doctrine and practice. The noble aim of these faithful men was to provide an academic environment in which the students’ faith in God and His Word would be fortified as they pursued their studies in secular fields. Further, it is clear that the design of these founders and founding documents was not merely to give the respective schools a faithful inception, but to preserve and protect their faithfulness in perpetuity. As already noted, this solemn obligation rests principally upon the shoulders of the trustees of these schools.

On the basis of a summary of these aims and purposes of school founders and the defining legal documents describing these aims and purposes, dedicated Christian parents **have the right** to expect the following:

1. Trustees who exalt the Bible and believe it is the verbally inspired, inerrant revelation of God to men.
2. Trustees who know and understand the purpose of the founders as stated in the school charter and who are dedicated to keeping their school in harmony with said purpose
3. Trustees who therefore will govern the school in harmony with Biblical authority

4. Trustees who are not ashamed to identify faithful churches of Christ with the church set forth in the New Testament rather than with religious denominations of human origin
5. Trustees who are not only members “in good standing” of a church of Christ, but who are members “in good standing” of a church of Christ that is “in good standing” with the Lord and His Word
6. Trustees who will employ and keep employed only a president who meets all of the foregoing criteria for the trustees
7. Trustees who have the fortitude to dismiss without hesitation a president who fails or refuses to meet these criteria
8. A president who will secure and maintain faculty members who have unquestionably sound Biblical convictions and who will communicate these convictions to the students, whether in Bible, science, math, literature, history, physical education, or any other fields of learning
9. A president who has the fortitude to dismiss, rather than defend, without hesitation any faculty member who fails or refuses to exhibit such unquestionable soundness
10. Guest speakers invited to the campus for chapel, lectureships, and other special occasions who are likewise unquestionably sound in the faith (unless they have been invited for the specific purpose of refuting their errors)

Already, we have made mention of the outright apostate condition of many of these schools and the position of compromise of those not yet in full-blown apostasy. These woeful conditions are what faithful Christian parents will actually find if they give serious consideration to existent brotherhood schools, as we shall document in part in the following section.

What Higher “Christian” Education Is Delivering and Has Produced

We are not unaware that the assertion of the previous paragraph is a significant one in its implications. We begin this section with the sober realization that this assertion will be far from popular with many, if not with most of brethren. The fact that one invites all sorts of censure, accusation, and motive judgments when he dares raise questions about or criticize a “brotherhood” school only demonstrates how dangerously powerful the schools have become. In some circles, one is far more likely to be vilified for criticizing a school than for saying all sorts of uncomplimentary and shameful things about the church of the Lord or a faithful brother who may dare raise questions about said school.

We realize that this assertion indicts numerous brethren (particularly at trustee and administrative level). Without hesitation, we charge that such brethren have led, are now leading, or have surrendered their schools to a grievously compromised posture that countermands the very fundamental truths these schools were established to inculcate and perpetuate (i.e., inspiration and authority of the Bible, Scriptural identity of the church, Biblical hermeneutics, Scriptural worship and organization, et al.). We further charge that the evidence

is incontestable that the foregoing statement represents exactly what has occurred and is occurring on these campuses.

We do not come at this subject from the “anti-college” perspective of a Daniel Sommer or a J.D. Tant. Rather, we believe the Bible generically authorizes schools at whatever level that have the Bible as their foundation. We favor more of them and have enthusiastically supported, endorsed, and praised various schools in years past—**as long as they remained true to the Bible and the Biblical aim of their founders**. We would still support and recommend any of them that met these criteria—if we could find such a faithful institution. This writer is in some respects a “product” of Christian colleges, earning degrees as a Bible major in two of the universities founded and operated by brethren, which were colleges at the time. The education I received at both of these schools has been a great blessing to me. Brethren who have operated these schools the last few decades have not done me any personal harm, so I have no grievance of any sort on a personal level against anyone connected with any of them or against any of the schools.

It will give me no pleasure to set forth even a small portion of the abundance of evidence that demonstrates how deeply ingrained compromise and liberalism have become throughout brotherhood academe. Pepperdine University has been a bastion of error and compromise on the West Coast for almost six decades. The other colleges were generally perceived as conservative, with some more so than others, until the 1970s. Space will not allow me to give detailed reviews of all of the schools. I will give attention primarily to three schools that in various ways are representative of the others. In fairness, although compromise is discernible on all of the campuses, it has been going on longer, is more deeply rooted in, and has made greater inroads in some than in others. I now proceed to produce some of the testimony that demonstrates how far from their original purposes these institutions have departed and what peril they hold for the souls of the young people entrusted to them.

Pepperdine University

George Pepperdine’s school had been in existence a quarter of a century at the time of his death in 1962. With hardly any interruption, once it started deviating from the Truth, Pepperdine University has continued to be the nerve center and wellspring of liberalism in California and the western United States. Its apostasy over several decades is so generally acknowledged by those who have even a smattering of Bible knowledge and respect for its authority that said apostasy hardly needs documentation. Nonetheless, we shall furnish some, especially for the benefit of the young and/or uninformed who may be reading these words.

Even before George Pepperdine's passing, his school was perceptibly listing leftward. It took less than twenty years for it to become the pioneer in campus liberalism in the twentieth century, moving far more quickly to that status than any other such school. In 1954, at the age of sixteen, this writer attended a Christian camp in Idaho. Hugh M. Tiner, Pepperdine President at the time, was one of the camp's teachers/speakers. My father, who at the time preached in Boise, revealed to me his unflattering evaluation of brother Tiner from having preached in Gospel meetings in California in the early 1950s. My father had little confidence in brother Tiner's strength of convictions.

Tiner served as Pepperdine's president from 1939 to 1957, and the soft, loose, and liberal drift began and accelerated on his watch. To be fair, this drift perhaps occurred by default as much as by intent, but at best, he allowed it to occur. Soon after Tiner became president, E.V. Pullias, already teaching at Pepperdine, was elevated to the position of dean. He apparently became the tail that wagged the entire Pepperdine dog for the remainder of his tenure, with "President" Tiner little more than a figurehead and fundraiser. Pullias was much concerned with achieving academic reputation for the college (which he did), but little with its doctrinal direction or reputation (Rice, *Contending*, 1). Under his guidance, by 1957, Pepperdine College was so doctrinally corrupt that few Christian parents would risk sending their children there.

With the trustees forced to recognize the need to "clean up" Pepperdine, Tiner and Pullias were relieved of their posts in 1957, and M. Norvel Young and J.P. Sanders (then Dean of David Lipscomb College), both of whom had reputations of soundness, were installed as president and dean, respectively. There was some movement in the right direction for their first few years, but faithful brethren, hoping this would continue, found themselves disappointed within a few years. In the 1960s, Harding College dismissed several teachers because of their doctrinal corruption, and Pepperdine signaled its sympathy for error by hiring five of them. About the same time (1968), Young brought Bill Banowsky to Pepperdine to be his principal assistant, and he became Pepperdine's fourth president when Young retired in 1971, at which time Young became chancellor.

By the beginning of Banowsky's administration, the ultra-liberal, subversive-to-the-Truth *Mission Magazine* had been in publication four years. Banowsky was one of its founding trustees. Although he eventually resigned, he never disavowed or hinted at any criticism of the publication's destructive agenda. Furthermore, Frank Pack, head of Pepperdine's religion

department since 1964, also one of *Mission's* founding trustees and a member of its board of editors, continued his *Mission* affiliations.

The indications of a liberal agenda became more undeniable with each passing year under Banowsky. Frank Pack, with his liberal connections, was apparently not liberal enough for the new president, who brought in Tony Ash to head the religion department in 1972. Were there no other proofs by this time of Pepperdine's abandonment of any pretense at moving back to the Truth, the succession of rank liberal religion department heads for the next quarter century would convince anyone aware of the errors long associated with their names: Ash (1972–75), Carl Mitchell (1975–80), Frank Pack (1980–83, second tenure), Carroll Osburn (1983–85), and Tom Olbricht (1985–96). The religion department has not moderated in this regard in the intervening years.

Further miscellaneous indicators of the degree of Pepperdine University's nonstop deviation from the Truth through the years include the following:

From the 1970s to present, the annual lectureship has been a veritable "Who's Who" list of the most liberal men and women the school could find who still pretend to be part of the Lord's church. Even worse, in 1973, a Christian Church preacher, who was a Pepperdine sociology professor, taught a class on occultism. Just to be "fair," he lined up a psychic, an "alchemist," an Episcopal "priest" who spoke in "tongues," a "faith healer," and a witch as lecturers in the course. The professor was rewarded by being selected Pepperdine's "teacher of the year."

In 1975, Chancellor Norvel Young (yes, the same one from whose 1949 book, I have quoted), under the influence of alcohol (over twice the California blood alcohol level for drunkenness), collided with another automobile that burst into flames, killing two ladies and critically injuring a third in the car that he hit. He pleaded guilty to vehicular manslaughter, was sentenced to a year in jail (suspended), was fined \$2,000.00, and had his driver's license suspended for four years. We commend him for making a forthright confession of his sins, but that tragic episode did nothing to bolster the confidence of sound brethren in the school or their support of it.

By 1978, contrary to an explicit requirement of the original Articles of Incorporation that "each of the trustees must be a member in good standing of the Churches of Christ" (as cited earlier), forty per cent of the board was composed of those who were not members of any church of Christ—not even a liberal one (Rice, "Will Banowsky's...?", 1). Entertainer Pat Boone, disfellowshipped by all faithful brethren in the late 1960s (and finally even by his liberal "home

congregation,” Inglewood, CA, in 1971) for his defection to Pentecostalism, has long served on and even chaired Pepperdine’s Advisory Board. Part of that time he was concurrently on the Board of Regents of Oral Roberts University. In 2006, he and his wife, Shirley, gave \$3 million to Pepperdine.

By the 1980s, all expectations of even a desire on the part of the Pepperdine trustees or administration to stand for the founder’s aims and loyalty to the Bible had become manifestly futile. Liberal highlights of this decade included hosting the 1985 “Restoration Forum” with many of the most radical liberals in the church engaging in fellowship and urging unity with the Independent Christian Church through compromise. Also, in 1989 Pepperdine hosted one of the notorious “Christian Scholars Conferences,” the main purpose of which is to provide a platform for the most hard-core liberal voices in the church to present their heresies.

Matters have only “waxed worse and worse” in the intervening years. More recently, contrary to its generally conservative political and moral reputation, Pepperdine has signaled some decidedly liberal postures. In the 2008 presidential campaign, a conservative student group was forced to remove a poster identifying Barack Obama’s campaign promises with Socialism and urging people not to vote for him. Soon after that incident, Andrew Benton, Pepperdine’s president, yielded to political correctness and the California homosexuals. One of the school’s law professors appeared in a TV ad urging people to vote for Proposition 8, which was a referendum against legalizing marriage between homosexuals. Benton labeled the issue “partisan politics” and apologized for Pepperdine’s being perceived as taking a position on the issue. This school has long been lost beyond reclamation to the Truth and to the purpose of brother George Pepperdine.

Abilene Christian University

Although Abilene Christian University (ACU) took much longer to stray so far to the left as Pepperdine has, the two schools have been traveling on parallel paths for the past three decades. For some years liberalism and apostasy have been so pervasive at ACU that it has caught up with Pepperdine in this regard. This writer is an alumnus of ACC, as it was known when he received a B.A. degree in Bible there in 1959. It is, therefore, particularly painful for me to chronicle her doctrinal departures, duty demands it.

My father and I originally planned for me to take my senior year of high school at the ACC campus school in 1954 and the next fall enroll in ACC to begin work on a degree in Bible. Providentially, the late Guy N. Woods, a friend of my father’s, spent a few days in our home while he conducted a debate in Boise, Idaho, where we lived at the time (I was then 16 years

old). We told him of our plan, and he recommended that we consider Freed-Hardeman College (now University) instead. Because we took his advice (for which I will ever be grateful), I arrived at ACC in 1957 with three years of solid Bible teaching already completed. The venerable Don Morris was president and the staunch Paul Southern was head of the Bible department. Although my wife and I both noticed a much more “relaxed” atmosphere regarding student regulations than we were accustomed to, I did not detect any liberal teachings in any of the Bible classes necessary for completion of my degree. I did notice that the ACC teachers were not as forthright in identifying and refuting erroneous concepts as those at Freed-Hardeman had been.

1969 proved to be a crucial year in ACU’s history and future. It lost the faithful leadership of its president and its Bible department head, respectively, as Don Morris and Paul Southern both retired. John Stevens, the new president, increasingly allowed the door of compromise to be opened during his twelve-year administration. Several things indicate that J.D. Thomas, the new Bible department head, consciously opened the door to more than compromise. With a PhD from the University of Chicago, he began teaching at ACC in 1949 and was given direction of the lectureship in 1952. His first year in that post he assigned G.C. Brewer the subject of “Grace and Salvation,” admitting that he did so because he knew that Brewer agreed with the apostate K.C. Moser’s “grace only” heresy. In fact, in retrospect, the Brewer invitation may be one of the earliest omens of the drastic changes that would occur at ACU over the next half century.

As can be imagined, Brewer’s lecture caused quite a ruckus among brethren, but Thomas counted Brewer’s lecture to be a doctrinal “turning point” for the church. Moser’s final book, *The Gist of Romans*, was published in 1957, my first year at ACC. An anonymous benefactor furnished me (and I assume all Bible majors) with a copy of the book, which contains much of Moser’s error. Obviously, someone wanted to influence the minds of young would-be preachers with Moser’s doctrine. In later years, learning of Thomas’s sympathy with Moser, as well as other indicators of his liberal position, I have wondered if Thomas may have been the benefactor. In very recent years he was interviewed by a brother who could not believe he would sanction the gross digression of ACU. The querist was shocked to hear Thomas give his full approbation to the liberal posture of the school. Thomas had apparently been very patiently and covertly concealing a liberal agenda for several years.

Some of us who have had a “vested” interest in ACC/ACU as alumni or for other reasons have seen coming for almost four decades the rampant apostasy that presently characterizes

this school. As in every outright departure from the Faith, whether in an individual, a congregation, or a school, the shift is never abrupt. The devil always takes short steps when leading men astray. Both the ones being led and observers of their egress usually long deny there is any such drift until finally the metamorphosis is so complete that denial is folly. Such has been the history of the evolution of the once sound and solid ACC to the ACU that revels in its incurable digression.

Often the earliest indicators of a compromising philosophy in the schools is seen in the speakers invited to speak on annual lectureships and workshops. At least, by the early 1970s such indicators were visible at ACU. J.D. Thomas placed direction of the lectureship in the hands of Carl Brecheen in 1970, but about the same time Thomas initiated a series of workshops, originally inviting preachers and elders to attend, and (two of which I attended). Some of the most notorious liberals of that time (e.g., Roy Osborne, Carl Ketcherside, Roy Bowen Ward, et al., who were liberal before liberal became “cool”) were invited to speak. No recordings, questions, “amens,” or other visible signs of agreement or disagreements were permitted (rules which at least one ACU Bible professor ignored). These were continued only three or four years, but they gave numerous liberals a valuable platform with an implied neutrality at best on the part of ACU. Ere long some of the very liberals on this program were eased over into the lectureship lineup.

At about the same time, more liberals began to be seen on the lectureship roster each year. I became so dismayed by 1974 that I wrote two letters of concern to ACU. The first one, in response to an ACC Alumni Fund appeal, dated November 1, reads as follows:

Sorry, but I cannot conscientiously support ACC by sending either money or students there as long as it continues to feature men such as Jim Reynolds, Don Finto, Stanley Shipp, Roy Osborne, and several others who are subversive to true New Testament Christianity. My support and encouragement will instead be directed to schools that have not forgotten their original purpose and the thousands of dedicated saints who sacrificed to establish and maintain them.

Someone who read my handwritten note on the backside of the funds appeal thought President Stevens should see it. Accordingly, he wrote me on November 12, 1974, in part:

Dear Dub:

I appreciate your note in connection with this year's annual fund.

Dub, our friendship has been so good that I hope you will come by and talk with me personally about these problems, or I shall be pleased to come by Granbury [TX, where I lived at the time, DM] at the first opportunity.

Abilene Christian College does not desire to feature those individuals who are doctrinally unsound or morally questionable. You know, for example, that for the last two or three years we have not had the men you have mentioned on our lectureship programs.

Yet—so far as I know—none of these men has been withdrawn from by the church.... I do not like to put people on the black list just because there are some who raise questions about them.... Therefore we cannot afford to say that we wouldn't use anybody at all who had any kind of criticism against him.

But—you know us, and we know you, and we have been friends for a long time, and I don't know of any reason we can't get together and discuss the cause of Christian education and the work of the church and what we are supposed to be accomplishing. Let me know when you are coming through Abilene.

Sincerely yours, s/John C. Stevens

The Stevens letter reveals the “response which is no response” that seems to be inbred in school administrators. Note the reference to the false teachers I mentioned as not being on the lectureship the last two or three years. If they were not invited back because of their liberalism, why were they invited in the first place? He also implies ignorance of their errors, but is it not incumbent upon those responsible for planning such programs to know the doctrinal stance of men or women who will be addressing large audiences with the implied endorsement of the ones who invited them (that is, if they are concerned about such matters)? Note the defense that none of the liberals I mentioned had been withdrawn from. Of course, they had not. They all preached or taught in situations that fully endorsed their liberalism. I never had any sort of close friendship with brother Stevens, though I suppose he knew me when we would very occasionally see each other. From the tone of his letter, however, one would think that we had grown up from boyhood together. His “good buddy” approach came across to me as political backslapping and favor-currying.

That same month, the ACC Bible Department mailed a five-page, two-section questionnaire to alumni Bible majors. Section one related to biographical information, which, of course, had my name attached. The final question on this section invited suggestions and recommendations, which I answered as follows: “I recommend that ACC take a firmer stand against liberalism and false doctrine, rather than giving their purveyors a platform, as has often been the case in the past few years.”

The second section was arranged so that all of the responses would remain anonymous. It invited recommendations, criticisms, suggestions, or comments. Accordingly, I expressed far more extensively my concerns over the school's direction than what I wrote earlier. I prefaced my remarks as follows: “I am deeply sorry that I cannot feel good about supporting ACC with my

money or my influence. I have not been able to do so for the past 3 or 4 years. My principal reasons are as follows:" I listed and discussed six areas of concern:

1. The intimate connection between *Mission Magazine* and ACC faculty and board members for several years. I pointed out that the faculty members who had dissociated themselves from its board had done so very quietly and had never disavowed its agenda and that no administration-level repudiation had been made of the paper. This left the impression that the administration and Bible department were in full agreement with the subversive direction of *Mission* or that they did not care, neither of which was acceptable.
2. Numerous speakers over the past four or five years who would hardly have been allowed on the campus twenty years earlier had been given a platform on the lectureship. I suggested that if Carl Brecheen was not aware of the errors of these men before inviting them, they should get a new lectureship director. I chided the school for pleading ignorance of the liberalism of these men on the one hand although they had invited some of them to defend liberal principles on the Preachers/Elders Workshops.
3. Sitting behind John Willis, ACC Bible professor at the time, in the 1971 school sponsored "Preachers' Workshop" and watching him nod assent to blasphemous statements of the rankest liberals on the program.
4. Steady relaxation of student dress and behavior codes.
5. That some of those who had graduated with Bible degrees in the previous four or five years did not seem well grounded, except in a lot of modern theological jargon. In fundamental doctrinal issues (e.g., undenominational nature of the church, instrumental music, plan of salvation, premillennialism, restoration history, et al.), they were very weak. Furthermore, these alumni seemed to consider themselves "above" such issues. These factors imply a change in the Bible faculty's emphasis and educational philosophy over the previous several years.
6. The cumulative effect of all of the above, plus other nuances and impressions that were difficult to identify precisely, but that were nonetheless real.

I concluded with the following comments:

I am sure that you are aware that many are concerned about the direction of the school, which seems to be more and more, however gradual, toward a liberal and hypertolerant stance. Please do not ignore our pleas. Thousands of men and women who wanted to provide a genuine Christian education for their children and for others have poured their efforts and millions of dollars into the school. Many of these have long since died, but if they were able to do so they would weep to see the spirit of compromise and tolerance that has been increasing during the past few years. Many of us who have supported the school and who are still living, but feel we can no longer support it, feel deep sorrow with each reflection on what it could be when measured against what it has become.

By this time I had ceased attending ACC lectureships and publicizing or advertising any of their workshops. I have been on the campus only once since 1974.

Between 1974 and 1981, I had no communication with anyone at ACU except to receive an occasional fund raising phone call or letter. In that period the number of unsound men and

women appearing on the lectureships and workshops steadily increased. Upon seeing the lectureship roster for 1981, I wrote my concerns about two of the most pronounced heretics who spoke. I addressed my March 17 letter to Carl Brecheen, director of the lectureship, and wrote in part as follows:

I am sorry to have to write in a critical vein, but I feel that I must. I was terribly disappointed that on this year's lecture program there were two men about whose names and work there are some serious clouds. I refer to Lynn Anderson of the Highland Church in Abilene and Richard Hughes, Editor of *Mission Magazine*. I cannot rationalize why the school must continue to invite men who have built a reputation over a period of time by either leading in or associating themselves with unsound causes and uncertain sounds.

I then mentioned that Anderson had made such statements and associated himself with such people the several previous years that they did not need to be documented again. I called Brecheen's attention to a recent Abilene denominational "unity service" in which Anderson participated and Anderson's conducting a "church growth" workshop for various denominational "pastors" a few months earlier. Hughes had recently become editor of *Mission Magazine*, and it had been rumored that he would change its direction. However, in its January issue (two months before my letter and under Hughes' editorship), I quote to Brecheen from an article in which Victor Hunter referred to his "ministry" to "Christians from Anglican, Methodist, Baptist, and Mennonite churches, as well as Churches of Christ."

I asked Brecheen how he could justify inviting such men as Anderson and Hughes, and inquired, "Do you not understand that, by placing them on the ACU Lectureship, they are being given credence in the eyes of brethren who are not informed?" I allowed that any lectureship director could make an occasional mistake, but that the "mistakes" involving false teachers on ACU Lectures had long ago become an annual pattern. I closed by begging him to respond with some words of reassurance.

Brecheen responded promptly (March 20) and said he was distressed to receive my letter and to read the remarks critical of Anderson and Hughes. He admitted to having received "several" letters about Hughes' appearance on the lectureship, but none before mine critical of Anderson. He claimed he invited Hughes on the recommendation of Stanley Lockhart, long known for his doctrinal softness and compromises, and a member of the ACU board (in 1981 he preached for the Westbury Church in Houston, TX). Brecheen claimed to have "great confidence" in Lockhart, which told me how shallow, imperceptive, ignorant, or liberal (or all three, perhaps, as subsequent years seem to indicate) Brecheen was. I was amazed that he said he had never read an issue of *Mission Magazine*, but that Lockhart had told him that he "felt that [Hughes] was in the process" of changing its direction. Brecheen expressed "sore

disappointment” at the statement I quoted from Hunter’s article in the January 1981 issue and added, to his credit, “Such statements cannot be justified Scripturally.” (I doubt, however, that Brecheen would have any problems with such statements today.)

Amazingly, Brecheen said he was not aware of Anderson’s involvement in any recent “unity service” (though in my response I pointed out that he should read his local paper, sending him a copy of the dated clipping from the *Abilene Reporter-News*). He said he asked Lynn about the “Church Growth Workshop” for the denominational preachers. Lynn said he “expressed his Biblical convictions on fundamentals with regard to scripture, the church, baptism, etc., from the very outset of the meeting.” He also told Brecheen that he did not know how to turn down the invitation “without appearing to be unloving and terribly offensive” (never mind that his behavior was “unloving and terribly offensive” to the Lord and His Truth). Brecheen then defended Anderson by saying he was not sure what he would have done in that situation, which again, told me much about the weakness of Brecheen’s convictions, and closed by saying, “but we are still deeply committed to the church, the scriptures, and the fundamentals of the gospel.”

I responded on March 25, assuring him again of my distress at feeling the need to voice the criticisms of my earlier letter. As earlier mentioned, I enclosed a copy of the January 17, 1981 (*Abilene Reporter-News*, p. 9-A), on which I circled Anderson’s involvement in the local “unity meeting.” I chided him for not reading his own newspaper. I then told him that Anderson’s statements about his comments in the “Church Growth Workshop” did not jibe with what one who attended the workshop saw and heard. Rather, when Anderson got to the point of speaking of man’s lost condition and telling one how to become a Christian, he said that “this would be up to whatever our various doctrinal understandings may be as to how a person becomes a Christian.” I asked Brecheen, “Have I been laboring under a wrong impression all of these years that we are to be helping denominational groups go out of business,” instead of teaching them how to grow? I then quoted Anderson’s infamous 1973 calumny against the church, describing it as “a big, sick denomination,” and then stating, “I meant exactly every one of those three words, *big*, and *sick*, and *denomination*.” I pointed out that Anderson had never repudiated his statement, though eleven years had passed, and his use by ACU implied its endorsement of such. I also chided him for never having read an issue of *Mission Magazine* to keep abreast of the views of various heretics and learning who some of them were. He did not respond to my second letter.

Following Don Morris’s retirement in 1969, with each succeeding ACC/ACU president, compromise became more pronounced. Bill Teague succeeded John Stevens in 1981. While

the religion department continued to add liberals to its staff and the lectureship was increasingly filled with liberal speakers, 1985 occasioned a well-publicized scandal involving the Biology department that occupied the better part of that year. Students in the classes of Dr. Archie Manis and Dr. Kenneth Williams accused them of overtly teaching the anti-Biblical theory of evolution as factual science. Moreover, Manis was accused of depicting the Genesis creation account as a “myth” and a “hymn” rather than as a literal description of what occurred as God spoke the universe into being. Students had class notes to prove their charges. They contacted Bert Thompson, then Co-Director of Apologetics Press, for assistance. Thompson and his Co-Director at the time, Wayne Jackson, took up the matter after extensive investigation that proved the students’ charges beyond doubt. Thompson took the matter through proper channels all the way to the president and the board. In what has become an all-too-common response by school administrators to criticisms, they first denied the overwhelming evidence and then defended the guilty professors. From top to bottom, at all administrative levels, with the board’s backing, ACU sacrificed all integrity in a well-orchestrated whitewash and cover-up. Eventually Manis and Williams were allowed to resign quietly. Now it was obvious that there was not only a problem with theological liberalism at ACU, but a problem with simple honesty and accountability, as well.

Several years ago ACU “achieved” equality with Pepperdine as a proponent of apostasy and an encourager of unscriptural unity and fellowship. It has moved from having a few heretics on its lectureships, workshops, and seminars in the 1970s to having many on them in the 1980s. With the inauguration of Royce Money to succeed William Teague in 1991, the accelerator pedal on the liberal agenda has been all the way to the floor with no let-up. From 1990 forward school programs have rarely had any besides liberals on them, plus a sprinkling of denominationalists thrown in for good measure. Money defended the appointment in 1992 of a Methodist preacher, enrolled as a student at ACU, as editor of *The Optimist*, the school paper. The school hosted “Unity Forum XII” November 1–3, 1994, in which a group of liberal brethren played their continuing annual game of compromise with those in the Independent Christian Church.

Coincident with the beginning of Money’s administration, ACU Press began publishing a profusion of books by liberals (many of them on its faculty), which books seek to revise history, push for broad fellowship, and attack the concept of restoration. Their titles and authors are revealing enough to the perceptive reader: *The Cruciform Church*, *The Worldly Church*, *Will the Cycle Be Unbroken? American Origins of the Churches of Christ*, *Discovering Our Roots*, *Distant Voices*, *Hearing God’s Voice*, *Reclaiming a Heritage*, *Renewing God’s People*, *Reviving*

the Ancient Faith: The Story of Churches of Christ in America, Unfinished Reconciliations, The Main Thing, and Women in the Church—Reclaiming the Ideal. The list of men who wrote these books is a veritable “rogue’s gallery” of liberals and change agents, including: C. Leonard Allen, Douglas Foster, David Edwin Harrell, Jr., Gary Holloway, Richard Hughes (mentioned above as *Mission Magazine* Editor in the 1980s), Thomas Olbricht, Carroll Osburn, Darryl Tippens, and Michael Weed. ACU Press outdid itself by recently publishing *Lovers’ Quarrel*, Leroy Garrett’s autobiography, dean of living apostates who “voted” against liberalism in the 1950s before he began “voting” for it in the 1960s (and has continued to do so).

In November 1992, Andre Resner, ACU professor of religion and preaching, published a blasphemous piece titled “Christmas at Matthew’s House” in a subversive-to-the-Faith magazine called *Wineskins*, edited by Rubel Shelly. In his article, Resner labeled Mary as a “sexually questionable woman” and described the Lord’s birth as a “scandal.” In spite of these and other irreverent and ridiculous statements in the article, Resner assured questioners, “I believe in the virgin birth.” Money, almost humorously, quipped that he was shocked “that some people would readily believe that we would tolerate anyone in our Bible faculty who denied something as fundamental as the virgin birth.” The more appropriate question is why would some of us believe anything but that he **would** tolerate such on the Bible faculty?

From 1983–85, Carroll D. Osburn chaired the religion department at Pepperdine University, after which he became a Bible professor at ACU (his replacement at Pepperdine was Thomas Olbricht, an ACU Bible professor, so in effect they swapped roles). By 1993, when he wrote his book, *The Peaceable Kingdom*, Osburn had become more than a mere ACU professor; he was “Carmichael Distinguished Professor of New Testament”—quite a distinction. Rarely have we seen as small a book (138 pp.) packed with so much error. In it he rejects “arrogant exclusivism,” advocating that “Christian fellowship [be] extended to a broader arena” (64). He further pontificates:

There should be room in the Christian fellowship for those who differ on...whether the Lord’s Supper must be taken every Sunday, or whether instrumental music is used in worship. There should be room in the Christian fellowship for those who believe that Christ is the Son of God, but who differ on eschatological theories such as premillennialism...or soteriological matters such as whether baptism is “for” or “because of” remission of sins (90).

Osburn then has the temerity to describe himself as a “conservative,” labeling those who take a “propositional truth approach” (which, incidentally, is inspiration’s approach to truth) as “fundamentalists” (65). Although ACU Press did not publish this book, perhaps thinking it moved the change agenda along a bit too swiftly and openly (Osburn published it privately), ACU’s administration gave his heresies its implied endorsement by never disclaiming any of his radical

statements or censuring him for making them. He continued his exalted professorship several years thereafter, retiring by his own volition.

In 2001, Money gave discerning listeners a window to his deep-down convictions as an ecumenicist and unity-in-diversity devotee through and through. In his ACU Lectureship speech, after referring to John 3:5, he said:

I assume it's still true. That's the rule, but what about the exceptions? What about countless believers...whose spirituality and Christian virtues at times far outstrip mine? What about all that? I don't know, but the Lord knows exceptions, and I hope He makes a lot of them. Our job, it seems to me, is to teach the rule and let the Lord make the exceptions [after which there was long and loud applause].

As a true-to-form liberal, he surrendered to sheer emotional impulse. Money's convictions are so corrupted that he perhaps did not even recognize his words as vintage denominational tripe. Such is the theology of the president of ACU. The very passage with which he prefaced his "exception" statement is one in which the Lord **denied any exception** to His rule for entering the kingdom. Money got it totally wrong. It is not our job to teach the rule **and** suggest that the Lord will make exceptions. It is our job to teach God's rule—**period** (Mat. 28:19—20; Mark 16:15–16).

Various ACU faculty members (particularly Douglas Foster) have been leading the way to what they eagerly seek soon to effect—"unity" with the Christian Church (after all, to them the church of our Lord is merely a denomination, one of three equal parts of the "Stone-Campbell Movement"). One of the first concrete steps they took in this direction was to host "Unity Forum XII" November 1–3, 1994, in which liberal brethren played their continuing annual game of compromise with those in the Independent Christian Church. The itch for unity has grown increasingly severe with the passing of years, reaching its zenith in ACU's February 2006 Lectureship.

It was the made-to-order year in the eyes of Money and his campus accomplices. 2006 was the 100th anniversary of the founding of ACU (as Childers Classical Institute). It was also the 100th anniversary of the federal census that recognized the division caused by the instrumental music/missionary society liberals, resulting in the denomination known as the Christian Church. Money was so aglow with his "unity" mania that he invited Don Jeanes, president of Milligan College (affiliated with the Independent Christian Church [ICC]) to help him deliver the opening speech of the lectureship. The lectureship also featured another "Restoration Forum" with panels staffed by some of "our" unabashed liberals and some ICC men. The lectureship was obviously planned as a watershed event in the crusade for unity and

fellowship with the ICC, while ignoring the “elephant” in the powwow room—instrumental music and its implications relating to Biblical authority and hermeneutics.

Along with its earlier efforts, climaxed by the 2006 lectureship, ACU has defined what liberals mean by “unity in diversity”—ignore doctrinal error and its implications and pronounce “unity” and “fellowship” achieved, notwithstanding. The gargantuan irony of the dual centennial as it relates to ACU is that, as quoted earlier from the school’s 1906 charter, its founders sought to protect it from just such evil men as Royce Money. Its trustees were required to be members of a congregation that “rejects from its faith, worship and practice everything not required by either precept or example,” a qualification aimed specifically at the pro-instrument/society malefactors who had just split the church wide open. Money and his cronies have in effect handed this once magnificent school (as they would the entire church) over to these folks.

Money has, perhaps more than any other (due to his position of immense influence), whether consciously or unconsciously, established himself as the rightful heir of the late Carl Ketcherside’s insidious fellowship heresy. Were he living to observe the 2006 ACU Lectureship, Ketcherside would be immensely gratified at the progress of his unity philosophy over the past forty years among those considered to be “somewhat” in the kingdom. His comrade-in-arms, ACU, just will not let up on its unity-at-all-costs theme. Leroy Garrett (mentioned earlier in connection with his iconoclastic autobiography, published by ACU Press) was Ketcherside’s closest partner in theological crime, and besides Ketcherside, has been a principal in the efforts to blur the line of fellowship with the denominations in general (including both versions of the Christian Church). He lives in a retirement home in Denton, Texas (my home since 1980) and still occasionally “preaches” for his brethren in the Disciples of Christ Christian Church locally. **Money, through his current lectureship director, invited Garrett to deliver the opening address of the 2008 ACU Lectures.**

Additional evidences of departures by the ACU administration (and behind it, the ACU board of trustees) are abundant, but space fails us to report—much less discuss— others. If the instances we have documented are not sufficient to convince one of the loss of this once powerful force for the Truth to the forces of error and sin, then more evidence would be pointless. We have devoted this great amount of attention to ACU because of its century-plus longevity and because it has grown in both size and influence to become one of the most powerful thought-shapers among brethren over the past half-century. It not only exerts great leadership on congregations through its graduates and its status, but it also exerts considerable influence on its sister institutions. Unfortunately its vast influence has been an exercise in

theological suicide when the purpose of its founders and its founding documents are weighed. It has for at least two generations been destroying the very purpose for which it was established—inculcation and propagation of the unadulterated Truth of the Bible.

Freed-Hardeman University

I have a special fondness for Freed-Hardeman University (F-HU) in Henderson, Tennessee. As I earlier stated, I chose Freed-Hardeman College (long before it achieved university status in 1990) over Abilene Christian College through the influence of the late Guy N. Woods. My father dropped me off in front of Paul Gray Hall in September 1954 and turned around and began the long drive back to Boise, Idaho, where he was preaching at the time. I was a green 16-year-old, who had been allowed to enroll in spite of not having finished high school. The three years that ensued proved to be pivotal not only in shaping the course of my convictions regarding the Bible, but also regarding the principal practical details of my earthly life. I shall ever be grateful for the men and women on its faculty who unwaveringly exalted the Bible and the church, whether in Bible classes or in classes in the sciences, history, literature, music, or other disciplines.

My student career began four years after the departure of the lionized N.B. Hardeman, co-founder of the school, as Freed-Hardeman's long-time president. His successor, the late H.A. Dixon, was decidedly "Hardemanesque" in his devotion to the Bible, his ability to preach it, and to strict discipline. His Bible faculty of such men as Frank Van Dyke, W. Claude Hall, G.K. Wallace, Earl West, C.P. Roland, Robert Witt, and Thomas Scott gave my classmates and me a foundation that one had to work hard to depart from (as some lamentably did). I will ever be in debt to sister Lavonne Scott for teaching (and encouraging) me to write.

My family has "Freed-Hardeman" stamped all over it, spread over four generations. My father-in-law, the late B.B. James, attended the school while he preached in Henderson from 1950–54. Lavonne and I met on campus when she began her freshman year at the beginning of my second year. Her three siblings all graduated from F-HC. Two of our three children and one of our daughters-in-law attended F-HC. One of our granddaughters is to begin her college career at F-HU (on full scholarship, incidentally) in 2009.

I state all of the above to help the reader see the long and deep roots of connection and confidence that I have had with and affection I have had for the school. I cannot express, therefore, the sadness I feel in having to lodge criticisms against my first college alma mater. The Freed-Hardeman University, as in the history of other such brotherhood schools, has evolved into an institution little resembling the beloved Freed-Hardeman College from which I

graduated over fifty years ago. Has it “progressed” as rapidly and as far down the broad way of compromise and liberalism as almost all of its sister schools have? The evidence will reveal that it has not done so, at least not outwardly. However, the evidence will also show that if it does not locate its brakes on its downward journey, it will inevitably end up where they are.

I have included F-HU in these detailed reviews for three reasons:

1. I am deeply grieved by the compromises the trustees and administration have been making for several years, which are definitely contrary to the convictions of the founders
2. I hope that someone (trustee, faculty member, alumni, parent, or generous donor) might read these words and be alarmed enough at the evidence to take action and perhaps be instrumental in calling the school back to its uncompromising moorings
3. I believe that parents, who may be under the impression that there are no doctrinal or philosophical problems on this storied campus, need to be informed of at least some of these symptoms.

During my tenure as editor of *THE GOSPEL JOURNAL*, I made the following observations in one of my columns:

While it is necessary on occasion to highlight the extreme departures some who once were among us have made, there is room for genuine optimism. One of the encouraging things I experience in my travels to various places is meeting saints I had not known before, who love the Truth and who are determined to uphold it. There are many, many more such “out there” who faithfully make their appointed rounds each day, living uprightly, teaching those who will listen, and contending for the faith. They would sooner be shot than compromise. We need to guard against the “Elijah Complex.” There are far more than seven thousand who have not “bowed the knee” to the damnable philosophies and influences all about us.

A climactic division occurred in the church a century ago. The symptoms were the use of instrumental music in worship and the employment of missionary societies in evangelism; the cause was rebellion against Scriptural authority. When the dust had settled, a scant fifteen percent of those who had once been united in the Truth had withstood the onslaught of digression. A percentage far greater than this remains steadfast now, and I believe will continue to do so.

But, someone may be thinking, “There has been no such division since then.” That is correct, but it is on the horizon. The sundering is not yet so universal as to enable a census of congregations and/or Christians as either “conservative” or “liberal.” However, the distinction between two contradictory spiritual postures in the church is so clearly definable as to be undeniable. The deniers would feel right at home in Alice’s Wonderland, which is where they are already living, at least spiritually.

The division is clear in many cases and places, involving schools, papers, and congregations. For example, who can rationally gainsay that Pepperdine, Abilene Christian, and Lipscomb Universities have utterly severed themselves from sound and faithful brethren? Further, who would dare argue that they can ever be turned from their leftward agendas? The other schools have apparently hitched their wagons to them. (The silence of the other brotherhood-related universities concerning the egregious departures of these bigger schools is deafening. It can only be interpreted as tacit agreement and endorsement.) The boards of the

“wannabe” schools would do well to look a bit more closely at PU, ACU, and LU and reassess whether or not this is really what they “wannabe” (May 2003:28).

Suppose with me that a trustee of F-HU had written me in response to my statement relating to the “wannabe” “other schools,” sincerely feeling the weight of his responsibility to keep the school sound and asking me to relate to him some of my concerns about the school. I would likely have responded somewhat as follows:

Dear brother _____:

Thank you for the very kind and encouraging remarks. I appreciate and accept your expression of love for the school and your determination to do your part toward its faithful adherence to its charter, and more so to the Word of God. I assure you that I have no desire to criticize F-HU (or any school for that matter) just for the sake of being a critic. My criticisms have arisen from my own deep well of love for the school and the fear that it is increasingly slipping from its moorings. I pray that it may be returned to the place of unquestioned commitment to Truth and righteousness that it occupied for so many, many years. I must admit that I am not optimistic about the prospects. The historical evolution pattern of faithfulness/compromise/digression/blatant apostasy in schools begun and supported by our brethren suggests anything but optimism. How greatly I wish it were not so, especially for the school to which I owe so much. I appreciate and accept your statement of feeling a keen responsibility for the soundness of the F-HU I believe we both dearly love.

I count it providential that the late Guy N. Woods came on the scene at just the right time in my life. I remained in close contact with him until his death. Without doubt, my life would have taken a decidedly different course had I not gone to F-HC before I went to ACC (I would not have met my beloved Lavonne, for starters). I have a great love for the school because of the things for which it stood for so many years before and for a number of years after my time there as a student.

Before going further, let me state unequivocally that I have never been and I am not now opposed to Christian education in principle—as long as it remains just exactly that. However, I freely admit not only to “dissatisfaction” with most of what are now called “Christian” universities, but my abhorrence at the path almost all of them have taken.

Historically, schools established by faithful brethren have proved themselves to be fertile breeding grounds for apostasy and digression in the church for at least 150 years. Notable examples are A. Campbell’s Bethany College and Kentucky University in the mid-19th century with its College of the Bible. Pepperdine, ACU, and Lipscomb have led the way in the same direction over the past few decades. Rochester College, formerly Michigan Christian College (of which Rubel Shelly serves as president—enough said), no longer even pretends to stand for the Truth.

I have documentation that Ohio Valley University and York College have made serious compromises. A quick look at the list of lectureship speakers at all of the aforementioned schools reveals the names of men well-known for their liberal views and influences. Lubbock Christian University and Oklahoma Christian University are not far behind ACU at all. OCU cannot separate its direction from the Christian Chronicle, the primary propaganda organ of brotherhood change agency, even if it had no problems on campus—which it indeed does. Its board plucked its current president from an administrative post at Pepperdine.

Harding University has likewise shown itself to be susceptible to the virus of liberalism. It kept James Bales, with his grievous errors on marriage, divorce, and remarriage, on its faculty for years. Then there's Jimmy Allen, still teaching there, in spite of his error concerning the purpose of baptism, his justification of social/cultural drinking, and more recently, his annihilation doctrine. Further, HU can hardly have a function without Jeff Walling, the whiz kid paped piper who ridicules sound brethren, but has difficulty finding a false teacher he's unwilling to embrace. Jack Wood Sears was for years chairman of the science department, all the while he was adamantly arguing that the days of creation may have been vast eons of time (a blatant and unnecessary denial of the Biblical record and accommodation to evolution). Schools don't retain such faculty by accident.

I agree for the most part that F-HU and Faulkner are not in the category of these other schools—yet. They are definitely the best we have left, and that is precisely why I (and many others) are so alarmed at the signs that we may be losing—or may have already lost—they also. With all of the potential they have for good, schools may have even more potential for evil. They must therefore be carefully observed and scrutinized (and yes, criticized) for the first signs of drifting from their moorings. And “drift” is what they do. School administrators do not suddenly jump with all four feet into the cesspool of compromise and liberalism. But little by little, they either cause or allow (there is often little perceptible difference) changes to occur until the departure from the Truth is so plain that even the blind cannot deny it, by which time there is insufficient influence or will to withstand it.

I was a student at ACC (ACU) in 1957–59 (immediately following my years at F-HC), and in my wildest dreams I would never have imagined how far to the left it has now veered (although it was already not as strong as F-HC was at the time). Far too often (in fact, I would say, usually), by the time brethren begin to recognize the signs of drifting from original intent, the die is already cast. When brethren begin to approach administrators with concerns over such changes, administrators tend initially to deny the accusations (as with the Bible versions issue at F-HU, and as with the Chairman of the Bible Department's defense of the modernistic views of one of his professors, both mentioned below; ACU so acted initially concerning its theistic evolutionist biology professor in 1985-86). The next step is to defend the very practice they have earlier denied or the faculty member who was proved to be in error (I suppose F-HU long ago ceased to require or forbid any specific Bible version).

The exercises in compromise generally continue in small increments (just as change agents in the church work their agenda in local congregations) until the founders' original emphasis and purpose are completely swept away in the sweet smell of “success” (as gauged by such things as growing enrollment, accreditation, and revenue raised). Loyalty to the old paths of Biblical doctrine gradually become secondary. Brethren who raise objections don't usually have much money, so they can be disregarded as old fogey troublemakers. By this stage the school has begun serving the opposite purpose from that for which it was founded and for which many stalwart saints sacrificed much over many years. My understanding is that the boards of schools are appointed specifically to keep the schools true to their foundational charters and to hold administrators accountable for doing so in the operation of them. The appearance to many of us on the “outside” of academe is that boards all too often “rubber stamp” and defend almost anything administrators choose to do. (Admittedly, I say this as an outsider. I do not know the discussions and debates that occur behind closed doors of board meetings.)

As you will see from the information below, the concerns for my beloved alma mater are neither recent nor few. While I speak only for myself in these concerns, rest assured that I am

not alone in them. They began more than thirty years ago. I therefore fully realize that many of the concerns I will voice to you will involve occurrences that predate your election as a trustee. I was deeply grieved at the death of brother Dixon (1969, I believe). I thought that brother Gardner was a good selection to succeed him, for I believed he had the same strength of conviction so many of us appreciated in brother Dixon. I told brother Gardner so at the time. I believe he did well for a few years (e.g., his procurement of Thomas B. Warren as Chairman of the Bible Department was a spectacular achievement), but I came to be sorely disappointed in his leadership, as explained below. I have no reason to doubt your sincerity in feeling a responsibility to keep the school sound and whole, for which I again sincerely applaud you. Therefore, I trust that you will be interested in some of my concerns, as enumerated below:

1. Some serious lapses in either attention or in knowledge (or both) began to manifest themselves in the lectureship line-up in the early 1970s (e.g., Landon Saunders [who drew strong protests for expressing his equivocation about instrumental music in worship] and Ira North [perceived by many faithful brethren as more promoter than Gospel preacher]).
2. By 1976, some serious concerns about the school began to be voiced. Franklin Camp (a lectureship "fixture" of several years) and Harrell Davidson, both of whom worked fulltime with the church in Adamsville, Alabama, were among those invited to speak on the 1977 lectureship. They both determined they could not accept their invitations in light of some of the men who had appeared on the school's recent preceding lectureships, lest their appearance be perceived as an endorsement. Franklin Camp's call to William Woodson, declining their invitations, caused Woodson (then Bible department head and lectureship director) to suggest that some representatives from the school and some brethren selected by Camp and Davidson should meet to discuss their concerns. In the meeting (which included Gardner and Brad Brumley, whom I will discuss later), Woodson and Gardner promised they would cease inviting objectionable men. Things improved for a while, but since that time matters have become far worse concerning speaker selections than they were earlier.
3. More than one event in 1977 proved to be "red flags" concerning the school's direction. The first thing that caused me concern that year was the appearance of certain speakers on the lectureship (lectureship rosters are reliable barometers of a school's stance, almost without exception). Joe Barnett, a "dynamic" Texas preacher, was a featured evening speaker, yet it was no secret that he was closely allied with liberals and their causes in his home state (I was well familiar with this fact because it is also my home state and was my place of residence at the time). Likewise, Batsell Barrett Baxter was on the program, and his reputation had been tainted by his continued work with and endorsement of the Herald of Truth radio and TV programs, the liberal bent of which had been fully exposed in a marathon 1973 meeting of a few hundred concerned brethren with representatives of the Herald of Truth. At the time, completely unaware of the action of Harrell Davidson and Franklin Camp regarding the 1977 lectureship, I dared express in the Open Forum my concern over what I perceived to be a dangerous trend (i.e., inviting men to speak on the lectureship more because of their names and "dynamic" delivery rather than their convictions in the Truth). I pointed out that I lived (at that time) about three hours' drive from the campus of ACU, where Barnett and others of his doctrinal softness had been featured speakers and faculty members for several years, but I chose to drive twelve hours to hear men speak who love the Truth. I wondered aloud if I may as well begin making the short drive to Abilene in February each year instead of the long drive to Henderson. My comments drew a number of "amens" from those attending the Forum. Many came up to

me through the remainder of the Lectureship and expressed their appreciation and their similar concerns, including Franklin Camp (again, I was not aware at that point that brethren Camp and Davidson had lodged their objections to Woodson concerning some of the speakers). However, William Woodson, then Chairman of the Bible Department, was decidedly not pleased with my comments. He caught me later in the day and he strongly expressed his displeasure at my criticism in about an hour-long spirited discussion between just the two of us. He did not even try to counter or calm my concerns, but only sought to defend brother Gardner (whose leadership he said my comments impugned) and to let me know he had no appreciation and very little tolerance for any criticism. I suppose that, after the concerns expressed by Camp and Davidson only a short time before, my comments were like salt in a wound to Woodson. In this same year, and largely because of some of the lectureship speakers, the late Ira Y. Rice voiced his concerns in the Open Forum and declared that his repulsion was so great that he would not set foot on campus again until these trends/problems were addressed and corrected.

4. Yet another event in 1977 drew considerable attention. By December, almost a firestorm had arisen over which version(s) would be and were being used for the school's Bible courses. Clyde Woods (an F-HC classmate of mine) was accused of using the RSV in his courses. President Gardner denied that any teachers were so doing, but it was plain from student class notes that Woods was doing so in his classes. A group of men (B.B. James [my father-in-law] and the late J. Noel Merideth were among them) met with Gardner, which meeting resulted in a "Versions Policy," formulated and adopted by the school, specifying that only the KJV and ASV would be used as texts in the school's courses. As you may know, that policy has long since been abandoned.
5. Each year's lectureship only seemed to get worse instead of better regarding speaker selection. In 1981, I expressed during the Open Forum my concern relating to the content of one particular speaker that year. In his chapel-hour speech, Stephen North, son of Ira North, had praised the Salvation Army highly and had labeled drunkenness (alcoholism) as merely a disease. There was no rebuttal or disclaimer of any sort from anyone connected with the school. Brother Gardner got up behind him and praised the speech! When I expressed my concern, numerous "Amens" could be heard in the auditorium. Various ones told me that what I said needed to be said. (In a tragic and ironic footnote, a few years later, Stephen North, a judge in Nashville at the time, was arrested for drunk driving.)
6. In 1982, I was shocked at the announcement that Brad Brumley (mentioned above), director of the school's summer on-campus Christian Training Series, had invited John Allen Chalk to be the featured speaker during that year. I knew that Chalk was Brumley's nephew. The first person I met when I set foot on campus, September 1954, was Chalk, who, as I, had arrived early. None could question his brilliance, even as a student, but by the mid-1960s, none could question his conversion to liberalism. Herald of Truth hired him as its radio speaker when he was still a young man, and many of us believe this "went to his head." He quit preaching in about 1972 (in the face of strong criticisms of some of his unorthodox statements), went back to school for a law degree, and began practicing law in Abilene with little activity in the church thereafter (even in liberal congregations). My point is that his liberal reputation of several years was widespread by 1982. I thought it strange that Brumley had not kept up with his nephew better than this. I therefore wrote brother Brumley to express my shock and alarm, and he responded very defensively, self-righteously asserting, "I don't keep files on brethren like some people do." I was even more alarmed at Brumley's response. I called some other brethren whom I knew would be equally concerned (e.g., Winfred Clark, Bobby Duncan, Noel Meredith, Robert Taylor). We

appealed to those in charge (some appealed directly to brother Gardner), and Chalk was cancelled. However, this episode further revealed the existence of a systemic weakness in the invitation process for school-sponsored programs.

7. Few indeed know of the following conversation I now confide to you. In 1986 the late Guy N. Woods preached in a Gospel meeting at the Pearl Street Church in Denton, Texas, where I was local evangelist at the time. Brother Woods' love for and support of F-HU were well known for decades. During the last several years that he conducted the Open Forum, he always stayed with Claude and Delorese Gardner. Shortly before the Gospel meeting here, brother Woods' mother had died, leaving him her estate of several tens of thousands of dollars. He told me he did not have a need for the money, and was considering how to put it to the best use. I was humbled by his asking my advice on the matter. He confided to me that he had thought of giving it to F-HU, but he feared that it would not be put to the use he would intend for it because he no longer had confidence in the direction of the school. I told him that I shared his misgivings.
8. Many alumni have been concerned for several years over the seeming total lack of discrimination exercised by those who manage the campus bookstore. Admittedly, students who want to buy books written by Max Lucado, Rubel Shelly, Lynn Anderson, F. LaGard Smith, and numerous other apostates, can find places to buy them. The same is true of such perverted Bible "versions" as the NIV. The school's justification for making such works—that absolutely undermine the faith—readily available to young, pliable minds is beyond my understanding, however. The implied message to students is that the faculty is unconcerned about either the error or the potential harm in such books. Is the bookstore so financially strapped that it must sell such trash to survive? If so, it should perhaps close its doors. Do the administration and /or Board have no concern about the implied endorsement of these materials? If they do not, then they have surely lost their way. Do the administration and/or Bible faculty see no danger or harm in this practice? If they do not, they have serious perception and/or conviction problems. Worse still, do the administration and/or Bible faculty agree with the poison such books contain? If they agree, then F-HU has already caught up with PU, ACU, and LU. If they do not agree, they should not be implying that they do.
9. Our youngest son and his wife began their freshman year together at F-HU in 1985. He majored in Bible and additionally took every pre-engineering course offered. They both graduated with honors (he with a 4.0 GPA). The late Dowell Flatt was head of the Bible department during those years. It was sad that in one of Andy's courses under him, he left the authenticity of Mark 16:9–20 "up for grabs." One of Andy's serious and capable classmates wrote a paper for the class, defending the authenticity of the passage and on which he received a "C." The classmate was convinced that his MS was downgraded because he presented a strong case with which Flatt disagreed. It has since become public knowledge that Flatt also held and was teaching the old modernistic theory that the inspired writers of the synoptic Gospel accounts depended on a mythical "Q" document as their source. Winford Claiborne (one of Dowell's fellow-teachers in the Bible department for several years) stated to me in a telephone conversation that "there is no doubt that" Dowell taught this heresy. Furthermore, I have a copy of the class notes he distributed to his students that verify this fact. Yet, when this sad circumstance finally became publicly known in 2002, Earl Edwards, current Bible Department Chairman, forcefully defended Flatt and denied that he held or taught such. So we had an administration that tolerated the Chairman of its Bible Department who taught a modernist heresy concerning the source of the Gospel accounts and cast doubt on the authenticity of a major portion of one of those

accounts. Further, when Flatt's unfortunate complete emotional breakdown forced his resignation as chairman, his successor Chairman defended his predecessor when he had sufficiently recovered to return to teaching. Such matters do not exactly inspire confidence in the school's Bible department, which for generations was the heart and soul of the school.

10. Several years ago, the school chose Dave Hogan of Singapore as its "Missionary in Residence" for the year. At this announcement, several of us who have made numerous preaching trips to Singapore and who knew the church situation there well, wrote to brother Gardner, appealing to him to reconsider the Hogan choice. It had become necessary for faithful brethren in Singapore to withdraw from him and from the congregation with which he worked some years before. There was no indication that any of the F-HU personnel who selected Hogan had ever been to Singapore or knew anything about the situation among brethren there, but knew of him only as one who had done "mission work" for several years. The school persisted in its honoring of brother Hogan, and our appeals were ignored. While I realize fully that "the school is not the church," surely the matter of recognizing the teaching of Scripture on the subject of fellowship enters in at some point for a school whose faculty is composed of members of the church and which depends primarily upon said members for its support.
11. I have no personal axe to grind with brother Gardner. As earlier indicated, I congratulated him when the board chose him to succeed brother Dixon. However, I was sorely disappointed in his presidency overall. Ultimately, the responsibility for all of my concerns must lie at his feet. His accepting a phony "honorary doctorate" from Pepperdine University, the seat of radical liberals on the west coast for decades, was hard for many alumni to stomach or rationalize. That anyone officially connected with F-HU would have any agreeable association with Pepperdine was inconceivable, yet here was the president of our school, prostituting himself by accepting its praise and plaudits. The speech by Stephen North (cited above) is a case in point and is illustrative of a serious weakness I believe brother Gardner evinced. North got up and taught things that were false, and brother Gardner got up behind him and commended the speech. Brother Dixon (or brother Hardeman before him) would never have allowed any such thing to pass without letting the audience know on the spot that those comments did not represent the position of F-HC/F-HU. This (and actually all of the other things I have mentioned and will mention), seems to be a reflection of brother Gardner's unwillingness or inability to provide leadership that was unquestionably on the side of doctrinal Truth. The ironic thing about brother Gardner (and many concur in this observation) is that since retiring from the presidency, he suddenly found his voice for Truth and for exposure of error. Amazingly, he is now able to see the serious and destructive inroads liberalism has made in the church in the last four decades, and he has written (and perhaps spoken) forcefully against many of the very things he at least allowed, if not endorsed, while he was president. This phenomenon has been so evident that numerous ones have remarked with downright amusement at the "coincidental" nature of it. It was almost as if a switch was thrown. Very soon after his retirement, these strong doctrinal articles from his pen began to appear in various brotherhood journals. I can say a hearty "amen" to every one of them that I have read. But why, oh why, did he wait to find his backbone until he was out of the position of influence the presidency afforded him? Was the solicitation of revenue for the school important enough to make such compromises (to ask the question, I fear, is to answer it)? The question I have (and again, I am far from being alone) is why could he not perceive these dangers and speak and write about them while he was president? Had he done so, he may have turned a few squeamish brethren

off and forfeited some financial support for the school, but I guarantee you he would have had many, if not most, alumni of pre-1970 and many of later years backing him all the way (as well as attracting many faithful brethren who are not alumni). Instead, so many have lost respect for the school. I must confess that I have great difficulty not construing his long silence on such matters, followed by this sudden, new-found strength, as a demonstration of hypocrisy.

12. Milton Sewell has raised millions of dollars and built several buildings, but I see sad signs that the spiritual weakness of the school has accelerated during his tenure. As important as endowments, buildings, and a large student body are, the strength of F-HU is in its unique spiritual heritage and emphasis that are unabashedly founded upon the Bible. Having lost these, it will be just another small school with some “Christian” accents, and its powerful history and heritage will have been consummately squandered. This very danger is what many of us see in the slow, steady, but sure changes that we continue to observe. I don’t know brother Sewell well at all. He was a classmate of my wife’s younger sister in the mid-1960s. I have met him only once that I can recall. He and his wife dropped in on a Gospel meeting in which I was preaching in Paris, Tennessee, a few years ago. By the exaggerated statements he made to and about me after my sermon, one would have thought that he and I were born the same day in the same hospital in which our mothers shared a room, that we have been chums ever since, and that I can just about out-preach anybody he ever heard. I appreciate genuine compliments as much as the next person, but I detest such fawning politics. He struck me as just that—an insincere politician and a backslapping glad-hander. I was impressed, all right, but not at all favorably. I do not see spiritual strength or leadership in such a man, but moral and spiritual weakness. The school has shown increasing signs of weakening and compromising under his leadership, some of which I will detail.
13. The Open Forum was in good hands and remained strong when Alan Highers succeeded brother Woods. Since Alan’s retirement, it has seriously floundered. For a time it appears that those in charge could not decide what direction to take it and even used a panel instead of a single moderator for a while. Ralph Gilmore, the current moderator, is nowhere near the caliber of man needed to conduct the Forum, either in his Bible knowledge or in the strength of his convictions. Furthermore, the school policy that was handed down (even before Alan Highers retired as Forum moderator), that there was to be no name-calling in the Forum, is ridiculous. False doctrines do not merely waft about on the breeze. They are conveyed by human carriers. The inspired writers did not blush to name such, but it seems that some policy-maker(s) at F-HU feel(s) that saints today must not be as “mean” and “unkind” as they imply the inspired writers were. I am not at all advocating that slander or hearsay should be allowed to take place, but give us back the days when false teachers such as Leroy Garrett, Carl Ketcherside, Roy Cogdill, Max King, the Campus Evangelism/Crossroads Movement principals, Rubel Shelly, and a host of others were named and their false doctrines were identified with them and opposed in the Open Forum. (Perhaps the names of advocates of error can no longer be called because to do so would be to name some of those on the lectureship from year to year.) The student body and brethren who came from all over to the lectureship were greatly strengthened by such. This, in turn, strengthened the Lord’s congregations. This muffling is a telltale sign of insipidity and grievous brotherhood political correctness that was totally foreign to F-HU in the halcyon days of her great spiritual girth. It is also foreign to the straightforward emphasis of Scripture.

14. The late Adron Doran was a long-time and dear friend of Lavonne's parents. Through this and other connections, Lavonne and I became close to brother and sister Doran in the last few years of his life. We still called and visited with the late sister Doran until her hearing totally failed. Afterward, we stayed in touch by mail, even when she had to get her caretaker to take dictation of her notes in reply to us. In a phone conversation with us soon after brother Doran's death, she asked if there was anything that belonged to "A" (her affectionate name for him) that I would like to have. She asked if I had copies of the books he had authored. I told her I had one or two of them. She offered to send me autographed copies of each one of them, which she promptly did. I mentioned his "trademark" bow ties (the only kind of tie he wore and always hand-tied). She enclosed one of them with the books, all treasured mementos of a great Gospel preacher and scholar. Brother Doran, ten or more years ago, while still on the F-HU board, confided to me his concerns over the pressures from some of the board members to take the school in a leftward direction. Sister Doran remembered his concerns well and brought them up to me on occasion after his passing. My point is that other concerned brethren and I are not imagining that some significant changes of the wrong kind have been going on at F-HU over the course of several years. I am well acquainted with two additional trustees who are greatly concerned about the school's direction, one of whom is so discouraged that he had decided once in recent years to resign in utter frustration and dismay, but changed his mind and decided to fight on. Perhaps the encroachments have been so many over so long a time and have already gone so far that it is already too late to stem the tide. As earlier observed, the devil always takes short steps, but he never ceases to march. I am strong in the opinion that F-HU is at a crucial crossroads in its history with the selection of a new president. Only a man of great spiritual depth, Scriptural knowledge, unwavering conviction in the old paths of Truth, and stiff backbone will be able to stem the tide that continues to swell. Brother Gardner had the Scriptural knowledge and the convictions in the Truth, but he simply lacked the backbone to stand. I did not see any of these qualities in brother Sewell. I have serious doubts that the majority of the board have either the courage or the wisdom to seek the sort of man who can bring the school back to its moorings on the solid rock of Truth. Joe Riley, the new president, surely has academic credentials and administrative experience, but you've made the unprecedented move this time of selecting a man who has no former connection with the school. All he knows of its heritage and history, of its founders and the convictions of its dedicated faculties over several decades, and of the generations of stalwart Gospel preachers who sat in its classrooms for their preparation is what he has read or been told (Sewell at least had the advantage of being an alumnus). And what does Riley know of the fellowship firestorm that has been gathering steam for thirty years or of the more recent fellowship crisis that has developed since 2005? Does he have any idea what any of the significant brotherhood "issues" are? If so, where does he stand on them, and what will he do about them in relation to his imprint upon the school?
15. John Dale's 2001 appointment to the board raised additional concerns. He has earned the reputation among faithful brethren in the area of Murray, KY (and well beyond) for several years of being sympathetic toward Rubel Shelly and his errors. Ironically, only a year before his appointment, he engaged in a shameful ecumenical exercise with the Roman Catholic Church in Murray. Men such as Jay Lockhart and Jeff Jenkins, two other recently appointed trustees, will not help bring the school back to its roots. Get a few more men like these on the board, and there is no hope for the future of the school as far as Scriptural soundness is concerned. I have been told that there were already some men of a considerable liberal bent on the board before Dale's appointment. If so, then you and your

fellow trustees who really stand in and for the old paths and intend to keep the school therein have a most difficult task ahead of you. I pray that you will not falter.

16. Whoever planned the 2005 Discussion Forum on fellowship and instrumental music in worship missed a golden opportunity. It could and should have been much stronger for the Truth than it was. I don't suppose Marlin Connelly taught anything that was untrue, but he had neither the reputation nor experience as a polemicist the occasion called for. Actually, he carried some rather heavy baggage, having spoken on the Nashville Jubilee a few years back, and taught at Lipscomb several years, neither of which exactly commend him as a tower of strength doctrinally. Further, as it turned out, he and Phillip Morrison, his (and the Truth's) opponent, are apparently big buddies in their Nashville associations. These matters were exacerbated by the selection of Phillip Slate to assist Connelly. Slate, like Connelly, has hardly distinguished himself as a defender of the faith. In fact, when I saw that he was going to be one of the participants, I was surprised that he was not assisting Morrison. The school had the best qualified man available right in its own back yard in Alan Highers. This fact is so obvious that it could not have been a mere oversight not to call on him. The fact that he is an alumnus of some distinction would certainly have enhanced this choice as a natural one, not to mention the fact that he had defended the Truth on this very subject in a major oral debate as well as having had other considerable polemic experience. It appears almost as if whoever planned that discussion did not want the case for Truth to be made as strongly as it could and should have been made—one more sign of weakness and carelessness on the part of someone(s).
17. I have publicly expressed my dismay that Walter Cronkite was invited to be the featured speaker at the December 2004 Advisory Board Benefit Dinner (Nov. 2004:30–31). There could hardly have been a greater contrast between his "values" (religiously and morally) and those for which F-HU should be standing without equivocation. It is bad enough that he is a leftist politically, but if possible, he is even further left in his theology. His appearance, with the implicit (if not explicit) endorsement by the school, sent a very mixed signal at best. Whoever came up with him to speak to a captive audience of Christians could have done little worse had they secured Bill or Hillary Clinton. Cronkite defamed and sullied the proud name of the school as far as I'm concerned. His presence there as the carrot for bringing in the big bucks would have been downright amusing had it not been so tragic. It gave every appearance that the administration believes the end justifies the means when it comes to attracting money.
18. The Bible Department was for several decades the heart of the school, and it had men on its faculty whose unflinching stand for and defense of the Truth were unquestioned and well-known. These included such respected names as Freed, Hardeman, Brigance, Hall, Dixon, Van Dyke, and Wallace. Even when those not so well known are considered, there was not a compromiser tolerated among them. Apparently, for years, the late Dowell Flatt (as noted above), with his modernistic views on textual criticism, was not only tolerated on the Bible faculty, but for some time chaired the department while holding and propagating these views. The present chairman (as earlier noted) defended Flatt when he came under fire for so teaching, denying, against the evidence, that Flatt held or taught them. Now the school not only tolerates, but features a faculty member who is extremely unstable doctrinally, if not guilty of compromise (as some believe him to be) as the "answer man" on the fabled "Open Forum." Ralph Gilmore has no problem with combining two acts of worship simultaneously (singing and the Lord's supper). The year 2003 was a banner year for demonstrating a major reason he is not qualified to moderate the Open Forum. He gave credence to a suggestion by Todd Deaver that spirit in John 4:23–24 refers to the Holy

Spirit, and that the Holy Spirit therefore directly aids us in our worship. He gave his imprimatur to the unauthorized elder reaffirmation/re-evaluation procedure as taught and practiced by Dave Miller and the Brown Trail (Hurst, TX) congregation. Gilmore glibly called the program a matter of “speculation” and then added that it might be good to set term limits and re-evaluate elders at the end of the set term. Further, he sought to justify addressing prayers to Jesus, on the basis of a misapplication of Acts 7:59 and Revelation 22:20. If these were not enough, in response to a question relating to Jesus’ statement warning the disciples about the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees (Mat. 16:12), he completely wrested the passage from its meaning. As an excuse to excoriate brethren whom he styled as “sin-smellers” and “inspection experts,” he said that Jesus was merely condemning the attitude of the Pharisees and Sadducees. It is evident that this brother is in way over his head as the Forum moderator. Surely there are men better qualified on the Bible faculty to fill this very important position.

19. I realize that none of us is omniscient. I do not know everything about everybody, nor does anyone else. In fact, I don’t even know everybody. For twenty-one years I planned and directed the Annual Denton Lectures, considered a major lectureship by many brethren. This lectureship featured 35 speakers each year in a Sunday morning–Thursday night, all-day, every-day program. We required a MS in advance of the program so that a book of the lectureship could be published each year. Anyone who directs such a program and who has a principal part in selection of speakers can/will make an occasional mistake. I have done so in this respect on a few occasions. In fact, I have had the distasteful task a few times of calling men and “uninviting” them after they had already committed to come and had submitted a MS—and after I learned some things about them and/or their doctrine I did not know at the time I invited them. However, I don’t believe anyone who is sound in the faith and who is a careful observer of our program through the years would even begin to accuse me of being involved in a pattern of inviting questionable men. I regret to say that I see not just an isolated factor or two in the items I have discussed above (including the lectureship), but a pattern stretching over more than three decades. The factors I have enumerated are evidence of either gross dereliction of duty or a deliberate agenda in the wrong direction. In either case, these things have hurt the school with many who were, for a number of years, among its strongest supporters. Some will not send their children there because of these factors. Others will not send their money. I must confess that when I get money appeals from F-HU in the mail, I regretfully discard them unopened. Likewise, when I get calls from students soliciting money for the school, I politely tell them I cannot make a contribution. Lavonne and I do not have much money, but if we felt differently about the school, we would likely find a way to help with some amount.

You mentioned that in my comments in the issue of *THE GOSPEL JOURNAL* to which you responded that I made some “broad brush” remarks about schools. It is difficult to avoid doing so for the very reason I mentioned in my comments there—the deafening silence of any school administration concerning the great and evident departures in other schools such as PU, ACU, and LU. The appearance is that the schools are a fraternity as closed as the legal or medical professions, in which it is verboten for one member of the fraternity to express any concern or criticism concerning any other member. As I earlier mentioned, I know that “the school is not the church.” However, if the administrators and faculty of F-HU are all Christians (as I assume they are), and the administrators and faculty of ACU or DU are all likewise Christians (perhaps assuming way too much in some cases), then are not Biblical principles of Christian fellowship relevant to these relationships? Do such passages as Ephesians 5:7, 11 and 2 John 9–11 apply only to saints who are not part of the administrations or faculties of

Christian universities? If some of us “paint with a broad brush” when we discuss the rampant apostasy on the campuses, it could be because the schools have given us the “brush” and several gallons of “paint” with which to apply it.

In one of your statements, I believe you have identified a significant factor in the concerns I have for the school: Many of the board members are simply businessmen (likely most are men of above-average means). They are much more versed in business matters than in Scriptural and/or brotherhood matters. I have no doubt that a major cause of the problems I see has to do with a lack of awareness. It seems to me that it should be incumbent on every board member to feel a responsibility to become and remain “aware” (as obviously you do). They should read books and periodicals that will inform them concerning important issues in the church. They should attend some other lectureships besides the one on campus. If they did, they would soon learn who is teaching/doing what. Of course, many, even preachers and elders, pride themselves on their ignorance of such matters. Like Brad Brumley, as mentioned above, they sort of draw up in a self-righteous posture as if keeping track of such matters is beneath them and somehow ungodly. That’s just for “mean-spirited watch-dogs and witch-hunters.” But didn’t the Lord command us at least to be wolf-detectors and fruit-inspectors (Mat. 7:15–16)? If matters were left up to these “ignorance-is-bliss” types, I hate to think what shape the church would be in today.

While our son and daughter-in-law were students, Lavonne and I continued to attend the lectures each year, although we became increasingly disenchanted with the strength of them. Since their graduation in 1989, we have not set foot on the campus, having neither time for nor interest in doing so. I do, however, closely read the list of speakers on the lectureship and other campus programs through school publications and the Website. The lists are invariably a “Duke’s mixture” of some men who are known for their faithfulness and others who are either known liberals, amicable associates of liberals, or compromisers otherwise at best. I have been told that lectureship attendance has been on the decline over the last few years. It would not surprise me if it is so. I know many who, like me, do not believe it is worth the time or effort to attend anymore.

But enough! I close not for lack of material, but because of weariness with the recitation. I pray that you will use your influence in the right direction, as you pledged you would, and that your influence will really count in your board meetings. Who knows but that you are come to F-HU for such a time as this? It would be wonderful beyond description if the trustees would give President Riley a mandate to take the school back to its roots.

Yours for the Cause,

s/Dub McClish

Actually, an F-HU trustee **did** respond to my comments in *The Gospel Journal*, and the foregoing was my response to him. No, F-HU is not as far gone as PU, ACU, and LU, but she is well on her way—just lagging a bit behind, all the while apparently remaining chummy with the worst offending schools. Will brethren never learn?

Had I the time and space to provide similar evidence of doctrinal digression and fellowship compromises relative to all of the other schools, I could have done so. In my assessment, F-HC and Faulkner University are the least affected by overt liberalism at this point, but they have demonstrated ominous signs of serious slippage in that direction.

Historically, by the time the start down this proverbial slippery slope is recognizable in a school (or a congregation), its brakes are already burned out. It is easier to unring a bell than to turn one around. **Lubbock Christian University** has been a haven for heretics for many years, both on its faculty and in its guest speakers. **Heritage Christian University** professes to be committed to the Bible, but continues to feature men and women who have proved that they are not so committed. It is sliding down the slope.

Our failure to provide any evidence of the departures at **Lipscomb University** was not for lack of it or for lack of inclination to do so. Under Harold Hazelip (two tenures), followed by Steve Flatt, and now President Lowry, the school that shames its namesake has just in the past three decades caught up with PU and ACU, and may have even passed them on Apostasy Avenue in some respects.

Space also failed us to provide information on the graduate schools operated by brethren. **Pepperdine's** is the oldest, followed by **Harding Graduate School of Religion**, **ACU's Graduate School**, and **Ambridge University** (or whatever its current name might be). To the last one, "by their fruits ye shall know them." Some of them have demonstrated their outright liberal agenda (PU and ACU), while those perhaps not so totally corrupted nonetheless have a history of liberal infiltrators on their faculties.

So in answer to the question in our title, "What should you expect your child to be taught by Higher 'Christian' Education?" it is clear that parents **should** expect them to be taught to love and honor the Bible as God's infallible revelation, to cherish and obey their Savior, and to respect His will faithfully concerning His church and its boundaries of fellowship. It is a disaster and waste beyond reckoning that, in the largest of these schools, they may generally expect to get the opposite and in the rest of them, they may expect to get little more than insipid versions of those crucial subjects.

All of the evidence I have provided relates directly to and results in tearing down of the limits and boundaries of fellowship as set forth in the New Testament. When the Scriptural doctrine of fellowship is surrendered, everything has been surrendered. The late W.B. West, Jr., long-time educator and Dean of Harding Graduate School of Religion for several years, stated in a 1967 letter to Ira Y. Rice, Jr.: "Unless the schools operated by our brethren stay true to the Book there is no reason for their existence" (Rice, *Axe*, 156). I know of no better way to conclude this chapter.

Works Cited

Campbell, Alexander. "Remarks." *Millennial Harbinger* May 1836:200–02.

- “Literary Institutions—No. II.” *Millennial Harbinger* Aug. 1836:375–79.
- “Our Colleges.” *Millennial Harbinger* Sept. 1845:420.
- Foster, Douglas A. “Abilene Christian University.” *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*, ed. Paul M. Bowers, Anthony L. Dunnavant, Douglas A. Foster, D. Newell Williams. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004:1–2.
- McClish, Dub. “Editor’s Clippings.” *The Gospel Journal* May 2003:28–30.
- “Editor’s Clippings.” *The Gospel Journal* Nov. 2004:30–31.
- Osburn, Carroll D. *The Peaceable Kingdom*. Abilene, TX: Restoration Perspectives, 1993.
- Rice, Jr., Ira Y. *Axe on the Root*, v. 2. Nashville: Willams, 1967.
- “Pepperdine(\$) Christian(?) University(!) Peppergate, Watergate—Which \$?!” *Contending for the Faith* Dec. 1973:1–8.
- “Will Banowsky’s Leaving California for OU Presidency Help Pepperdine?” *Contending for the Faith* Sep. 1978:1.
- Rushford, Jerry B. “Pepperdine University.” *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*, ed. Paul M. Bowers, Anthony L. Dunnavant, Douglas A. Foster, D. Newell Williams. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004:592–94.
- West, Earl Irvin. *The Search for the Ancient Order*, v. 1. Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1949.
- *The Search for the Ancient Order*, v. 2. Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1950.
- *The Search for the Ancient Order*, v. 3 Indianapolis: Religious Book Service, 1979.
- “Financial Endowment.” *Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia*. 6 Nov. 2008. Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Financial_endowment. 8 Dec. 2008.
- Young, M. Norvel. *A History of Colleges Established and Controlled by Members of the Churches of Christ* Kansas City: Old Paths, 1949.

[Note: I wrote this MS for and I presented a digest of it orally at the Contending for the Faith Lectures, hosted by the Spring, TX, Church of Christ, February 22–25, 2009. It was published in the book of the lectures, *Religion and Morality—From God or Man?* ed. David P. Brown (Spring, TX: Contending for the Faith.).]