

Did We Understand Mr. Money?

Dub McClish

Dr. Royce Money, President of Abilene Christian University, delivered a speech at the annual ACU Lectureship, February 21, 1993. Numerous reviews of and responses to it have since appeared. Reportedly, all of the ACU alumni were mailed a transcript of the speech, although I never received one (BA1959). However, I did receive a copy from another source a few days after the speech was delivered. It struck dismay, disappointment, and disgust to my heart to see the head of the largest school among Christians openly, yea, proudly confessing his agenda of error for the school. (We began writing letters of concern about the direction of the school to administrators at least as early as 1978, at which time at least some of those on "the hill" still expressed concern for keeping the school sound. Perhaps my letters explain why I did not receive a copy of the speech under consideration.)

Several reviews and responses relating to the speech expressed grave concern about various points made by brother Money. These articles were well-documented, well-worded, and stated numerous concerns about the explicit as well as the implicit content of the discourse. When such a statement is forthcoming from one in a position of great influence and when several brethren take issue with said material, often the author or his defenders will cry, "You misunderstood me!" Have we who have unapologetically reacted negatively to this speech misunderstood brother Money?

The reaction of brother Leroy Garrett will help answer this question. Although brother Garrett no longer publishes *The Restoration Review*, he still publishes "an occasional newsletter" titled *Last Time Around*. The front page of the June 1993 issue was taken up with his article entitled, "Good News (Mostly) From Abilene." For those who are either too young to know or who have been living under a rock for the past forty years, I give a bit of background on brother Garrett. In his younger years he was a champion of various "anti" positions, including Bible/Christian colleges and located preachers. He published a paper (*Bible Talk*) to advance his hobbies and publicly

debated these issues. In my freshman year at Freed-Hardeman College he made himself so obnoxious on the campus during the annual lectureship [1955] in opposition to the college that he spent a night in the local jail. During these years he was a "soul mate" to W. Carl Ketcherside and his *Mission Messenger*. However, sometime during the 1960's, both of these men swung to the opposite extreme and began to champion "unity in diversity," or, as they sometimes styled it, "fellowship without endorsement." Brother Garrett began *The Restoration Review* to advance his new "fellowship everybody" convictions. Among other things, he believes that "...the Bible does not teach that baptism is essential to salvation..." (RR, May 1982). Even a casual perusal of his now defunct journal (any issue thereof) will find him championing the most liberal positions, frequently depicting the church as a denomination, referring to various denominationalists as "Christians" and/or "brethren," and commending and/or publishing fellow-heretics. He has been on the "cutting edge" of the malignant liberalism among God's people since his doctrinal swing of the 1960s.

Now, to brother Garrett's review. It is apparent from the title of the article that he received the speech as good news. It is also apparent that if we who reacted negatively misunderstood the speech, brother Garrett's positive reaction to it signals that he also misunderstood it! Since the speech in question has been rather widely circulated and reviewed, I need not quote from it. However, I will refer to the things in the speech which caused brother Garrett to jump for joy.

He saw the speech as a signal that "meaningful change ...might be in the offing." By this I suppose he means a change from faithfully indoctrinating students in the pure Gospel of Christ (rather than opposing it), which was the aim of its founders. Brother Garrett praised brother Money for realizing that "...unity does not mean uniformity of belief...." He also liked Money's statement that "...our enemy is Satan, not each other." He quoted with approval the Money dictum, "We must realize the powerful dynamics of change."

As brother Garrett's title indicates, he did not agree with all of the Money speech. He disagreed with Money's characterization of acappella singing and male-led worship

as "essential beliefs." These were a "fly in the ointment." To brother Garrett, these are "two areas where change is most crucial." Garrett's full statement on these two points reveals his thinking clearly:

For us to go on implying that acappella singing is essential, as if mandated by Scripture, rather than our tradition or opinion, is counterproductive to meaningful change. And to continue our male-dominated worship services is to bury us in the past. To do either is to perpetuate our failure to come to terms with the relevance of Holy Scripture for the 21st century church.

Brother Garrett then opined that if brother Money would only listen to some of his own professors he would learn better. As a case in point, Garrett quoted from a recent address to the faculty by an unnamed professor who insisted that in these "times of change" instrumental music cannot be an issue, then with emphasis said, "it never should have been an issue." Brother Money might also learn somewhat from the ACU Bible faculty's Carroll Osborn (if he were not the anonymous professor quoted above). He advocated the leadership role of women in worship (along with Pentecostal "tongues speaking") in the 1992 ACU Lectures. Further, Jack Boyd, a member of the ACU music faculty, has been advocating (and introducing) the use of women in leadership roles in worship along with choirs and special Christmas, Thanksgiving, and Easter services in the Minter Lane Church of Christ, in which he is an elder, for some seven years.

Brother Garrett tells us that the Money speech was brought to his attention in the following way: "At our church several [ACU alumni] brought me their copy in case I had not seen it." "Our church" (note the sectarian terminology, DM) refers to the Singing Oaks Church of Christ in Denton, Texas, long in the forefront of liberalism in Denton. (I have been a resident of Denton almost since the 1980s and brother Garrett's house was only a few blocks from mine). A large portion of the membership and almost all of the elders and deacons consist of former members of the Pearl Street congregation, with which I have worked since late 1980. In 1979, when they failed in their bid to oust the elders and brother Goebel Music at Pearl Street and take it over, the liberal element left and took over the then small Singing Oaks congregation. In 1987, the "Fellowship Church of Christ," begun in 1974 by a group of apostate brethren in our city, closed its

doors. Brother Garrett had been a leader in it for several years. At least some of its members, including brother and sister Garrett and Wayne Dockery, its preacher, were accepted wholeheartedly by Singing Oaks. Brother Garrett has been used as a regular teacher in their education program. Such provides a brief background for his reference to "our church."

After stating his slight objections to the Money speech, brother Garrett concluded: "But still I join my friends at church in giving the ACU president high marks for most of what he did say, things his predecessors **could not and would not have said** [emp. DM]." Please consider the following observations:

1. Brother Garrett understood the Money speech just as I and several other concerned brethren did. The only difference is, we are greatly concerned at the implications of additional and accelerated harmful changes at ACU it portends; brother Garrett is greatly concerned that these changes are not coming fast enough!
2. Brother Garrett correctly perceived that the Money speech was a marked departure from the direction of those who preceded him. (I would draw the line on the Money predecessors about whom this would be true at the administration of the venerable Don H. Morris. The perceptible drift began with his respective successors, John Stevens and Bill Teague, Money's immediate predecessors. The former allowed the perilous doctrinal drift to begin, and the latter defended a professor who taught evolution as a fact and the Creation account in Genesis as a myth in his biology course. Teague's defense of this professor, of course, created a climate which encouraged the teaching of any and every sort of unorthodox position.)
3. Brother Garrett is not blind to the fact that there are professors in the ACU Bible department who have announced that they hold convictions that contradict two of the "essential beliefs" brother Money enunciated in his speech: acappella singing and "worship led by Christian men. " I would like to hear brother Money explain just how essential these "essential beliefs" really are. Brother Ian Fair, head of the ACU Bible faculty, made a lame response to the Osborn speech (which advocated Pentecostalism and the leadership role of women in worship), mildly expressing disagreement, but also indicating that he was not going to do anything about it. What about the "unnamed professor" quoted by brother Garrett who believes instrumental music in worship should never have been an issue? Are these worship "essentials" enough for brother Money to relieve professors who count them non-

essential from their duties and let them find employment in sectarian schools, or will he allow them to remain at ACU and hasten its plunge into full-blown sectarianism? (I fear I know the answer.) Brother Money tried to reassure us in his speech that everyone on his faculty believes in the virgin birth of Christ (an obvious response to the deserved outcry against brother Andre Resner's blasphemous "Christmas at Matthew's House" article in *Wineskins*). If his reassurance is to be believed, he or someone did a spectacular job in converting brother Resner from infidelity on this point in a short time, for it is clear from his article that he did not believe in the virgin conception and birth at the time he wrote it only a few weeks before the Money speech.

4. If I were brother Money, I would be greatly concerned and embarrassed over a commendation from brother Leroy Garrett. I would feel neither flattered nor encouraged. Without intending any disrespect, but attempting to merely state the fact of the matter, I would count a commendation from brother Garrett on any doctrinal stance a sure indication that I had gone astray. I have stirred brother Garrett's dander a few times in the years I have lived in Denton (not intentionally, but merely in the course of teaching the Truth) and I have counted each of these occasions an indicator that I was doing or saying what should be done or said. Now, it will be interesting to see if it matters at all to brother Money that brother Garrett has largely commended his speech and encouraged him to go even further.

5. Brother Garrett has observed that brother Money has "stolen some of his thunder" in announcing his "unity in diversity" and "dynamics of change" agenda for ACU and the church. However, this has been the practice at ACU now for the last three administrations of the school. All sorts of the strangest doctrinal sounds have come from various faculty members over the past several years. Furthermore, a platform has repeatedly been provided, sometimes with great praise and honor attached, to some of the most blatant false teachers among us. Thus, the enunciation of the "unity in diversity" program is just a vocalization of what has been going on at ACU for a long time. However, now it is to the point where brother Money's dictum may be in danger of self-destruction: there is not really much attention given to diversity by those who plan the ACU lectureships and workshops. They are loaded – literally stacked – with liberals, many of them of the rankest stripe. Oh, they will stoop to invite a token "conservative" or two now and then, but it is just that – a token. (Please understand that I am not seeking an invitation – unless things changed drastically in favor of the Gospel Truth, I would not go if invited.) I contend that this is not practicing what he preaches. Where is the diversity when hardly any but

liberals are invited? I charge brother Money and his liberal cohorts with actually practicing unity based on conformity (with liberalism) – the very thing he once declared he had tried and that would not work!

6. I understand why brother Money surrounds himself with brethren of a liberal mindset on his faculty and in the school's special programs. He himself is doctrinally liberal, and liberalism is his agenda. He thinks the left-hand bar ditch is the middle of the road and that is where he is proceeding as rapidly as he dares. This is not said to be disrespectful or slanderous; it is simply a demonstrable verity. This would be bad enough if he had little or no influence, but his decisions powerfully affect the thinking of many hundreds of trusting young people every day of the school year. We do what we do at the Pearl Street congregation concerning the Annual Denton Lectures for the same reason he does what he does at ACU. We surround ourselves with men on our Annual Denton Lectures each year who believe in the first century Christ, the first century Gospel, and the first century church for this and every other century. We would not knowingly invite a liberal to speak on our lectureship without the express intent of answering his error with the Truth of our Lord. I therefore understand why brother Money does what he does. I just wish he would quit pretending to be “conservative.” It is sheer hypocrisy to feign a conservative stance while defending and coddling liberals on his faculty and constantly giving other liberals a platform and ready endorsement.

One thing is sure in all of this: The Garrett article proves that we old moss-backed negative soreheads (which terms, doubtless, liberals would employ to describe founders and administrators through most of its history), who took umbrage at the Money speech understood exactly what he was saying!

[**Note:** I wrote this article for and it was published in the September 1993, issue of *Defender*, a publication of the Bellview Church of Christ, Pensacola, Florida, Bobby Lidell, editor.]

Attribution: From *thescripturecache.com*; Dub McClish, owner and administrator.