

Preliminary note to the reader: This article was sent to J. T. Smith at *Gospel Truths*, but J. T. refused to publish it. He would only agree to print it upon the condition that *Truth Magazine* printed Gene Frost's material and if I cut the article down to half its size. I proposed that if space was really the issue I would divide it into two articles and resubmit. This offer was ignored. Pagination apparently only counts when the other side is being heard. As to his demand that *Truth Magazine* print the diatribes of Gene Frost, I have nothing to do with the editing of that journal, as he well knows. Mike Willis is the editor, and this writer is in total agreement with his present policy on this matter. *Gospel Truths* and *The Preceptor* introduced this issue by publishing articles by Gene Frost. J. T. Smith has supported the cause of Frost by his editorials. Let them either publish both sides in their own venues, or else continue to print a one-sided discussion. That is entirely their decision.

Response to Gene Frost: "Poor, Poor, Pitiful Me"

Daniel H. King, Sr.

In the January, 2006 edition of *The Preceptor* (Volume 55, Number 1) published by the Preceptor Company, and the February, 2006 issue of *Gospel Truths* (Volume 17, Number 2) published by Gospel Truths, Incorporated, brother Gene Frost makes an effort at literary retaliation against this writer and Mike Willis because we published our book, *We Have A Right: Studies in Religious Collectivities*. Playing upon the name of our book, he titles his article, "Since When Has Misrepresentation Been A Right?" It is interesting how the mind of this author works, for in his May, 2005 article he accused me of "a cheap shot," said I was guilty of "gross perversions" (*Preceptor*, p. 136), "a deceitful, dishonest claim of inconsistency," and jabbed at me with the claim that "King is able to erect and destroy the straw man of his own making," (*Ibid.*, p. 137). He further described me as one of "the elite among us," "the elite of the society" (*Ibid.*, p. 137), etc. (Both Mike Willis and myself are members of the board of directors of the Guardian of Truth Foundation, a non-profit organization that owns two bookstores, publishes *Truth Magazine*, sponsors a yearly lectureship, and publishes many books and tracts on religious subjects.)

Now, in this new attempt at limiting the effectiveness of our business, the author of these and numerous other harsh judgments and rash criticisms (with the encouragement and support of the editors of *The Preceptor* and *Gospel Truths* magazines), along with untold pages of acidic rhetoric written down through the years against those of us who work together in the Guardian of Truth Foundation, has put forward one of the most egregious appeals for pity and sloppy sympathy that we have ever read in print journalism. He writes: "Friends, out of concern, have asked if I am upset. My reply is, No. While it is not pleasant to be vilified, it is not as though some strange thing has happened. When one stands for the truth, he can expect to be slandered..." (*Ibid.*, p. 6). *This writer cannot help but remember a popular song title from a couple of decades ago: "Poor, poor, pitiful me"!* Thus the title of this article.

Playing the Martyr

Further, he attempts to play the martyr with these words: "I don't feel that any of the mudslinging sticks to me...but pity him whose hands are dirty. It tells us more about him than it does about me" (p. 6). In this article he bemoans the fact that we have used his name in the treatise about 2.5 times per page, and expects that the reader will feel sorry for him because of this. Yet, in his original article in *The Preceptor* he called my name 27 times in a six page article (almost 4 times per page!), and in his second five page article therein, he called my name 15 times (3 times per page!) and that

of Mike Willis a comparable number. The legs of the lame are certainly not equal! We could only wish that he could see himself reflected in his own writings.

Amazing stuff! You would think that he believes that none of us has any memory at all, and cannot even read his past articles and books! This is the same fellow who made all of the uncalled-for accusations against this writer in his article that appeared mid-2005, has labeled Mike Willis a liar repeatedly in previous publications, and has persistently vilified us as money-grubbing advocates of an individually-supported missionary society in lines like the following: “The society solicits funds from members of every congregation. There is no limit to the amount of money the elite of the society can collect and control!” (*Preceptor*, May 2005, p. 137). In this most recent essay he refers to us as “the Guardian of Truth party” describes the book as an attempt to “demonize the opposition”, and a “warning to any others who would dare challenge the power, prestige, and influence of the Foundation” (*Preceptor*, January 2006, p. 6), charges us with “flagrant dishonesty” (*Ibid.* p. 7) and says, “I charge them with malicious falsification. This is not to be ugly...” (*Ibid.* p. 10). *Of course not, who would ever think of Gene Frost as being ugly to others? Why, it would never enter our minds.*

Frankly, Gene Frost is one of the least sympathetic figures living and writing among us today! We would be hard put to think of a more poisonous pen than the one he has wielded down through the years. Now that he has gotten a dose of some strong medicine – at his own incitement we might add – he wants us all to know that he has swallowed it down hard, and although it has made his little tummy ache, he has survived the ordeal.

Take Courage Gene!

Further, he informs us that one dear brother called and told him, “Gene, take courage; this shows how effective you have been!” He tells us that he had been informed before he read the work that “it doesn’t touch your arguments at all!” and it was described as “a slanderous and vicious attack upon my person” (p. 6). We all know that Gene Frost has sympathetic friends and followers. Of course those sympathizers are going to dole him out a healthy helping of their condolences. He should not, however, take that to be a general view that members of the Lord’s church have of him or of his position about collectivities. Mike and I would never have spent the amount of time necessary to draw together all of these materials for the purpose of responding to his allegations and arguments, if we did not believe that he had been able to muster some empathetic disciples in his long career of pushing his personal conscientious objection to individual collectivities upon the consciences of others. Certainly we know he has a few determined allies.

However, brother Frost must know also that there are a host of others out there who have a completely different view of all of this than his immediate and supportive friends. He needs to hear from some of those besides his intimate associates who share his personal scruples. Instead of begging for sympathy as he does in his most recent article, he would appear more heroic if he would simply stand at attention and salute the colors while his ship goes down!

There Is Another Side

We will tell him frankly that our own friends are telling us that we have once and for all answered the faulty reasoning of Gene Frost about this matter and responded to his every foolish quibble. They are telling us that they greatly appreciate the fact that someone has finally put the literary *coup de grace* to the Sommerite mentality among us. They appreciate the fact that someone has written a

formal response to his many articles and books. They are glad that now they have something to give those who have questions on this issue to read and study in order to help them resolve the matter in their mind. Precious few have agreed with him through the years but most have been reticent to tangle with a man of such a low and hateful opinion of his Christian brethren and who employs such despicable tactics in dealing with them. They are also telling us that it was about time someone stood up to the “schoolyard bully” and fed him some strong medicine to “cure what ails him.” I cannot wait to hear what they will now say about this most recent addition to his literary endeavors! They will surely be amazed that Gene Frost now views himself as a martyred saint, maltreated and wounded, desperate for the sympathetic tears of others. Believe it who may!

Frost’s Book Review

Here are Gene’s critical comments concerning the book:

What surprises me, and a major flaw in their effort, is that it lacks the scholarship and presentation that characterizes ethical journalism. There are numerous references with no documentation, such as footnotes, which would permit the reader to examine the facts, whether they are true or not. Why do they do this? They know better. Yet what they present are mere assertions, which in fact are not so, and false statements, some knowingly made (p. 6).

The reader will note that these assertions are made without even a hint of a footnote or quotation. It is a bare allegation to the effect that we are guilty of making bare allegations! There does not appear therein even a direct reference of any sort to a single statement made in the book. He alleges that we as the authors of the book are guilty of unethical journalism and that we have provided no documentation for our case. And yet, in the body of that accusation he does not cite a single instance of the thing that he alleges to prove his point. There is not even one footnote to this allegation. If our work does not qualify as “ethical journalism,” then pray tell us, what is this article penned by our brother?

The reader may, of course, judge for himself as to whether this unsubstantiated and inaccurate claim has any merit. There are, in point of fact, dozens of quotations from Holy Scripture, from Gene’s articles and books, as well as many quotations from Daniel and D. Austen Sommer, Carl Ketcherside, Leroy Garrett, as well as a host of others. I will simply challenge the reader to do the following: Get the book and read it for your self to see whether or not this allegation has any substance at all to it. I trust that any reader who actually opens the book will immediately see through brother Frost’s verbal barrage, and see it for what it really is, pure “smoke and mirrors.”

Since he is interested only in “truth and fairness” (according to his recent claim), you would expect that he would urge the reader to get the book and read it for himself. Not so. Instead, he attempts with almost every imaginable machination, to move the reader away from actually exploring the content of the work. Again, our brother gives the following critical judgment as to the value of our effort:

I find the writing of this book a waste of time: the effort in reading it a waste of time; and to respond a waste of time...except for the fact that a failure to respond would be misinterpreted as an inability to meet the “arguments.” There is only one redeeming feature for the book: I can recommend it only as a workbook to be used in a class studying logic, to challenge the students to recognize, identify, and show the fallacy of the illogical arguments.

If it is not used as a workbook in a serious study of logic, I suggest the book be catalogued under FICTION (pp. 6-7).

Awaiting Judgment of History

Brother Frost will have to excuse us while we await the judgment of history for an accurate accounting of the actual value of our work. I would guess that Hymenaeus and Alexander would have set forth a less than complimentary assessment of Paul's first letter to Timothy and Phygellus and Hermogenes regarding the second epistle. But in both instances theirs was not the final, nor the most important critical review that it received. In this case we are not at all surprised that Gene Frost is chagrined. We expected that. As one fellow said: "You can not skin a cat in any way that he will enjoy it." One could never respond to the religious errors of its principle promoter in such a fashion as to make him enjoy the process. We have attempted to make it as painless for him as possible – but one can only go so far. Others, in fact, have been quite complimentary of our work, and certainly far less critical than the "Daniel Sommer of our generation."

We can assuredly understand his desire to steer as many readers as possible away from reading the book, for it leaves the doctrines of Gene Frost in the dust bleeding and wounded – if not dead and buried! *We would only ask that the reader "ignore the plaintive cry of the vanquished" and get the book and read it. All the talk in the world will not replace a few hours of careful study.* We have no intention of restating our arguments in this venue. There are far too many of them to do that here. We believe that the book will stand the test of time, and that its broad circulation will set Sommerism in a proper historical context, and Gene Frost in his true position in history: a promoter of the New Sommerism. Again and again the Scriptures are quoted and explained in the context of the present discussion. It is this very thing that brother Frost wants to keep the reader away from, for careful study of the Scriptures and the application of simple logic will sink his proverbial ship beneath the froth of the biblical waves!

Shifting Battle Front

As is his custom, in his most recent effort Frost attempts to shift the battle from one point over to another when we put the axe to the root of his doctrine. Pinning him down as to the precise thing that he opposes has always proven quite a challenge. It is like trying to step on Jell-o. He claims that he is forever being misrepresented and misunderstood by his adversaries. He pretends that no one understands him, and that King and Willis must resort to the tactic of misrepresenting his position in order to defeat his theory:

Here is my assessment of the book, *We Have A Right*, with particular indictments. The book is based upon false premises and seeks to answer questions that were never raised. Our opposition to the Guardian of Truth Foundation is falsely stated...(p. 7).

The Old "Duck and Weave"

Do not be deceived by his methodology. This is just more of his "duck and weave" technique. We have seen this same old worn out approach whenever anyone has responded to him throughout the years. *We are all so ignorant, unscholarly, unethical and prejudiced that it is impossible for us to comprehend his true position!* At some juncture one would expect brother Frost to cease and desist from this effort at playing the martyr, and get down to the "brass tacks" of responding to the arguments made in the book. At some point the reader ought to ask of himself, "Has Gene Frost

made any argument in any way, shape or form from Scripture? Where has he made a new argument at all to justify his position?” Apparently he is entirely incapable of this, for he rambles on for many lines (five single-spaced pages in all) with more and more of the same old tired rhetoric, persistently accusing us of misrepresentation and distortion.

In point of fact, he flatly refuses to accept responsibility for the position that he occupies or any of its logical repercussions. He is forever being misrepresented. No one understands him. To those who read with discernment, though, this method blows up in his face. It reminds us of the story of Iraqi terrorist, Khay Rahnajet, who did not put enough postage on a letter bomb that he had sent out. It came back to him with “return to sender” stamped on it. Forgetting that it was the bomb he had sent out a few days before, he opened it and was blown to bits! This story is a parable of Gene Frost. To his dearest friends and closest disciples he is simply a misunderstood genius. To the rest of us, he is a man whose mind is forever closed to the necessary logical implications of his view. He refuses to own them. In the end, his arguments explode in his face, and he stands around after the detonation blaming everyone else for the catastrophe – while he has the detonation device between his own singed and smoking fingers!

Where Are The Bible Quotes And Arguments?

Only once does our brother make a slight reference to the Holy Bible (other than an early reference to his being mistreated by mean people like Dan King and Mike Willis), and that usage is a total perversion of the Word of God in a fruitless attempt to somehow correlate Scripture with his personal scruples about the Guardian of Truth Foundation. Note the following:

The church glorifies God; the Foundation honors the men who designed it, created it, and maintain it (Eph. 3:21). The one exists by the wisdom and authority of God; the Foundation reflects the wisdom of men. Jesus shed his blood to purchase the church; men claim a right to create a Foundation that has a “right” that mirrors the church in teaching and worship (p. 10).

That is the closest thing to a scriptural argument that he makes in the entire essay. When you read this, you would think that you were reading after a “purist” with regard to the church and its work. You would think that he does his work solely through the local church, and that he is opposed to all other institutions through which individuals might work together. Why, you would get the impression that he eschews all human institutions that do work comparable to that which the church does. *But you would be very, very wrong.*

Sommer’s Disciple

Instead, you will discover behind these words a true disciple of Daniel Sommer, both in theory and in practice. You would find his words printed on the pages of a religious journal which is published by a human institution called The Preceptor Company and in the journal of Gospel Truths, Incorporated, a non-profit religious foundation! You would discover that both the Preceptor Company and Gospel Truths, Incorporated are groups of men working together (collectives) under common oversight (an editor) and doing the work of teaching and preaching the gospel of Christ (the work which the church also does). You would find that each of these human institutions possesses its respective operational treasury. You would find that he has thus made a contribution of labor and time as well as a written document (all of which have monetary value and so are equivalent with money; the existence of copyright laws is proof positive that written material has

financial value) to two distinctive collectivities. Neither of these journals is a local church bulletin, or a lone individual doing his own work. In other words, you would find Gene Frost attacking the hated Guardian of Truth Foundation through his own favored religious collectives, the Preceptor Company and Gospel Truths, Incorporated! He is *doubly guilty* of the very “sin” that he accuses all of us of committing! So, we shall restate our brother’s proposition thus and see if “what is sauce for the goose” is perhaps also “sauce for the gander”:

The church glorifies God; the Preceptor Company honors the men who designed it, created it, and maintain it (Eph. 3:21). The one exists by the wisdom and authority of God; the Preceptor Company reflects the wisdom of men. Jesus shed his blood to purchase the church; men claim a right to create a Preceptor Company that has a “right” that mirrors the church in teaching and worship.

Gene would, of course, repudiate the position which we have stated above. Yet, all we have done here is to replace the name of the human institution under consideration. It is one of the collectivities that he favors, not the one he hates. So he would repudiate it. But all of us know that he can not do so consistently. If he does, his cause is sunk. And with it he is sunk. “By thy words shalt thou be justified, and by thy words shalt thou be condemned” (Matt. 12:37).

Since the article was also published in another and similar religious collective that preaches and teaches the gospel of Christ, namely Gospel Truths, Incorporated, let us restate the identical proposition with that other human institution in mind:

The church glorifies God; Gospel Truths, Incorporated honors the men who designed it, created it, and maintain it (Eph. 3:21). The one exists by the wisdom and authority of God; Gospel Truths, Incorporated reflects the wisdom of men. Jesus shed his blood to purchase the church; men claim a right to create Gospel Truths, Incorporated that has a “right” that mirrors the church in teaching and worship.

Pray, tell us how the proposition is materially different in the case of the Guardian of Truth Foundation, a publishing and book selling venture, and the Preceptor Company or Gospel Truths, Incorporated – also publishing and book selling ventures? Tell us how one is different from the other?

If brother Frost responds that the Guardian of Truth people have a lectureship and study the Bible together in a worship atmosphere, we will ask him, “How is that different from a group of the Preceptor writers, or the Gospel Truths writers, getting together and praying as an assembled group over a meal in a restaurant (outside the environment of the local church)?” We know that they do this sort of thing, for this writer was personally present at one of the meetings where a group of Gospel Truths writers did so.

Or again, consider these questions: “How is it that you think it is entirely proper for the writers of the Preceptor Company to send in their written manuscripts for brethren all over the country to read their material, while you condemn writers who read their written manuscripts to an assembled audience from all over the country? What makes one of those collectivities righteous and the other one sinful? What makes one arrangement good and the other wicked? How can you distinguish between reading it in print and listening to the writer read it aloud?”

An Added Footnote

A footnote to this present discussion is the fact that Danny Brown has apparently decided to commit the *Preceptor Magazine* of Beaumont, Texas to a public identification of this journal with the cause of Gene Frost, namely, promotion of the New Sommerism. He has decided to join the ranks of Daniel Sommer, Carl Ketcherside and Leroy Garrett in their furtherance of the idea that the local church is the only collectivity that has a right to teach the word of God. At the same time he functions in a leadership capacity over his own dual purpose, humanly devised collectivity that teaches the Word of God, the Preceptor Company. He has made this evident by being the first in both of these recent instances to print Gene's tirades, only later followed by *Gospel Truths*. Frost has acted the part of a proxy for him. J. T. Smith has already publicly committed to this cause with publication of his material and positive supportive comment. He has thus marginalized his journal. Will brother Brown do the same with his paper? Our brother has made no comment directly, but his actions in both instances speak much louder than words. How does he view the Florida College, Incorporated lectureships and the associated "worship services" sponsored by that "dual purpose" human institution? We wonder what he would say about the following proposition, once more, a simple logical extension of Gene Frost's remarks taken right off the pages of his own magazine:

The church glorifies God; Florida College, Incorporated honors the men who designed it, created it, and maintain it (Eph. 3:21). The one exists by the wisdom and authority of God; Florida College, Incorporated reflects the wisdom of men. Jesus shed his blood to purchase the church; men claim a right to create Florida College, Incorporated that has a "right" that mirrors the church in teaching and worship.

Gene Frost argues that a dual purpose human collectivity like Florida College, Incorporated has a right to exist. He argues that even though it "mirrors the church in teaching and worship" it is not an unscriptural collective. It has the scriptural right to exist and operate with the full financial support of Christians. It has the right to accept freewill offerings from individual saints. It has the right to be incorporated and operate under a board of directors. It has the right to sponsor daily "worship services" for the students (chapel). It has the right to teach the Bible to students in daily Bible classes. The school sends out emissaries to sponsor daily "worship services" at encampments around the nation (Florida College Camps). It has the right to do this also. Finally, he avers that it has the right to sponsor and conduct a yearly "gospel meeting" (a lectureship). Not only so, but he has been present and participated at the Florida College lectureships and their worship activities. There is no way on the top side of this planet that he can consistently entertain this view and at one and the same time maintain that the local church is the only collective that may teach and preach the Word of God! Still he does.

We wonder what brother Brown would say to that? Is he ready to sign on to this last proposition along with Gene Frost and many of his disciples? We wonder???

Conclusion

I will close this article with several brief points of emphasis. It is important that the reader keep these few basic issues in mind as all the confusion swirls about us in the present debate:

1. The Bible does not teach the theory that the local church is the only collective that may teach the Word of God. In fact, it teaches the very opposite. We have proven this proposition in our book. I will not restate all of our arguments. That would take many pages. Again I will say, read the book. One basic point should be reiterated, however. The Lord Jesus stressed the importance of the

individual saint living his life and conducting his business in such a fashion as to “let your light so shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify you Father who is in heaven” (Matt. 5:16). That is an individual passage, it deals with an individual obligation, and of course requires individual fulfillment. The Christian is to glorify God in all that he does. The passage says nothing at all about the local church.

In Ephesians 3:21 Paul said, “unto him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations for ever and ever.” This passage says that the purpose of the church is to give glory to the heavenly Father. The church, then, also gives praise and honor to God. This text does not intend to erase or eradicate the obligation of the Christian nor restrict him from his activities in the personal, family or business arena. If so, where is the proof in the passage itself? The Bible teaches that the individual saint gives glory to God, and it teaches that the church gives glory to God. The two are complimentary, not contradictory. Neither of these scriptures was intended to disprove the other, or nullify the teaching of the other.

What Gene Frost does with Ephesians 3:21 is precisely what Daniel Sommer, Carl Ketcherside and Leroy Garrett did before him: he wrenches the text from its biblical context in order to make it the pretext for his “local church is the only collectivity” doctrine. We believe that the local church is important as God’s local assembly for converting the lost, building up the saints, and relieving the needs of destitute and suffering brethren. That is not a debatable issue among us. But we do not find any solace at all in this passage for his “local church is the only collectivity” theory. The text itself relates to the universal church rather than the local church in this context, anyway. Note v. 15 especially, where the author speaks of the “whole family in heaven and earth.” The local congregation is not the subject under consideration. Read the passage for yourself. You will not find it there.

2. There is no way that any of those who take this view that the “local church is the only collectivity” seriously will ever follow their own theory to its logical conclusion and live by its dictates. Daniel Sommer did not do it. Neither did Carl Ketcherside or Leroy Garrett. Every one of them established or utilized a human organization to set forward their views. They were never satisfied with the local church alone. Gene Frost has been involved in a number of different human collectivities comparable to the Guardian of Truth Foundation in his lifetime. We proved this beyond all doubt in the book. J. T. Smith does not do it either. He founded Gospel Truths, Incorporated and it functions as an organization other than the local church to teach that the church is the only organization that can preach and teach the gospel! Now the Preceptor Company is doing the same thing. Not one of these fellows has ever lived according to his own theory. Apparently not one of them ever will.

3. Those who press this issue of personal scruple to the division of the churches and alienation of Christian fellowship are guilty of the sin of favoritism (1 Tim. 5:21). They vigorously oppose the Guardian of Truth Foundation while they say nothing at all about others who do exactly the same things, are organized in precisely the same way, or function similarly. Very often, as we have plainly demonstrated, they are guilty of the very same things that they condemn in us! One begins to wonder at some point whether jealousy may be involved here.

We must never forget that it was envy on the part of the religious leaders in the time of Christ that led to the crucifixion of Jesus (Matt. 27:18; Mark 15:10). Few would have suspected it of the priests and Sadducees at the time. They seemed to be noble men who were zealous for the Jewish nation. Jealousy is a subtle sin that is difficult to identify in those who are captivated by it (Tit. 3:3;

Jas. 3:14, 16). Some even preached Christ of envy and strife (Phil. 1:15). The very success of the Foundation and of *Truth Magazine* appears to have bred jealousy in those who have not been successful in their own printing and publishing enterprises. God knows the thoughts and intents of the hearts of men (Heb. 4:12) and he will judge the same in the final day (2 Cor. 5:10). As frail human beings we may only suppose what others may be thinking. And we might be wrong. But when their actions seem to indicate that their convictions are not applied consistently and thus may not be genuine (see Phil. 1:16, 17), we cannot remain silent about the matter as we explain to an interested public what may be going on behind the scenes of this debate.

4. *Gene Frost has offered us nothing new in his most recent article, just more of the “same old, same old”.* Let me encourage the reader to take part in a simple exercise: peruse Gene Frost’s article published in *The Preceptor* and *Gospel Truths*. Do you see a *new* biblical argument there? In fact, do you even *see* a biblical argument there? Where are all of the scripture citations? In and of itself, that should tell you something most significant about his position. He piles accusation upon accusation, insult upon insult, but he is never able to make a sensible biblical case for his view. We have dealt extensively with his “dual role organization” argument in our book. It is vacuous rhetoric, and his effort at excluding his favored human collectivities (Florida College, Inc., The Preceptor Company, Gospel Truths, Inc., etc.) would be comical if it were not so sad. In the light of Sacred Writ and sound principles of logic, it falls flat upon its face. The reason is clear: there is no biblical or logical case to be made for his view.

5. *As we have predicted, pressing this theory is now producing severed fellowship between brethren who should be working together. Individual scruples should not divide the church and should not trouble local congregations.* Over the past several months several preachers who have participated in the Truth Magazine Lectures have had gospel meetings cancelled by churches in various parts of the country. In essence, these fine men have been “withdrawn from” by those congregations. In a few cases the leadership of these congregations have seemed uncomfortable with their decision, but the “sound and fury” put forth by certain journals among us has frightened them so that they are afraid to be perceived as involved in something about which they are not sure.

The most recent and obvious proof of this type of action is what happened at the Brown Street church of Christ in Akron, Ohio on January 29, 2006. The elders of that church pressed Bob Dickey, who has not heretofore entertained this position, (in fact, he has written for *Truth Magazine*, and so has had a part in the work of the Foundation) to preach against the Guardian of Truth annual lectureship (interestingly, in his lesson he observed the Passover on the Florida College annual lectureship). After the sermon, Ron Mayfield, one of the elders, announced “we have found that we should no longer have financial fellowship with men who are taking part in these matters. We simply cannot support preachers who are connected with or are participating in these endeavors.”

Let us hope that this foolish and brash action will not be repeated elsewhere. Unfortunately, things do not look hopeful. The activities of private business endeavors and individual participation in them ought never to be the subject of congregational action. Down through the years Gene Frost has asked that there be no division on this issue “for now.” Who can deny that such a remark, however, assumes that there will be a time when fellowship *will* be broken? It is our conviction that fellowship ought never to be broken over such matters of personal and individual liberty. In our time it has not been severed over participation in *college* related matters, why should it now be broken over matters related to a *foundation*?

Finally, some have taken Frost's arguments to their logical conclusion and have formally and very publicly broken fellowship with those who are unwilling to yield to their personal scruples. We can respect their scruples about such things, and would never insist that they participate in that to which they object, but cannot respect their unwillingness to allow others the same right of individual conscience. One is being intellectually dishonest with himself and brethren everywhere if he on the one hand says that he wishes not to get involved in this dispute, wishes not to be perceived as taking sides in a national debate, and then on the other hand he withdraws his fellowship from those on one side of the question! When you decide that men on one side of the issue will not any longer be invited into your pulpit, you withdraw financial support from certain men in the field, and in the future refuse to consider for support those men who participate individually in such things as you may have your own personal qualms about – make no mistake about it – *you have chosen sides. You have chosen to break the fellowship!*

Thus, the sad result of Sommerism is being repeated before our very eyes in our own generation! Brethren who established schools did not disfellowship Daniel Sommer, Sommer and his crew drew away from them and would have almost nothing to do with them until near the end of his life (at which time Ketcherside and Garrett labeled the elderly gentleman an “apostate”). We are seeing the same thing from the disciples of Frost. In our book we pled for brethren to continue to work together in spite of individual scruples over these and comparable matters, even though we consider Gene Frost himself to be a “factious man” after the order of the fellow in Titus 3:10, 11. We make a clear distinction between Frost and those who share his convictions but do not share his spirit of factionalism:

Quite frankly, I do not relish the thought of conservative Christians “unsheathing the sword of the Spirit and cleaving one another in fratricidal strife” and thereafter fracturing into different warring factions. Therefore, I will not agree to be a participant in a prolonged repetition of the same arguments from both sides. These arguments have now been made off and on for over one hundred years without leading to any sort of consensus among our ranks and may now lead to further strife and perhaps ultimately to alienation of brethren over a matter of personal preference. Let it be abundantly clear to brethren who agree with and support our work and to those who do not—that our fellow Christians are accepted as faithful saints of God whether they read *Truth Magazine* or do not, and whether they choose to trade with Truth or CEI Bookstores, or attend the Truth Lectureship. We will continue to accept our faithful brethren in Christ “without doubtful disputations” whether or not they utilize the services of the Guardian of Truth Foundation. “Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind” (Romans 14:1, 5)” (*We Have A Right* 15).

Now brother Frost accuses us of imitating the liberals with their “yellow tag of quarantine” (*Preceptor*, Jan. 2006, p. 7), when in fact precisely the opposite is the case. The facts of recent history belie brother Frost's allegations. In no instance have any of us suggested that any man be cut off from support if he has refused to have a part with us in one of our endeavors. In fact, we have been urging continued fellowship, as the quotation above demonstrates. We have not changed our view, and this is still our appeal. At the Brown Street church in Akron and in a number of other places, who can deny that a different spirit is at work on the opposite side of these issues? Who is guilty of taking this action? Those who sympathize with us, or those who sympathize with Gene Frost?