

First Baptist Church of Hammond
In Indiana
Five Twenty-Three Sibley Street

January 3, 2007

Dr. R.B. Ouellette
First Baptist Church of Bridgeport
2400 King Road
Saginaw, MI 48601

Dear Brother Ouellette:

I received your most recent correspondence. I was pleased to hear from you, and I appreciate your concern about me and my ministry. I accepted your letter in the spirit of genuine concern and brotherly love. I was humbled to think that you would listen to one of my sermons once, let alone twice. Thank you for your concern about the truth of what I preached in the sermon, *For Christ's Sake*.

Brother Ouellette, I have no desire to enter into any kind of debate over that sermon or any other of my sermons. My doctrine, my faith, and my philosophies are as centered in the traditions which I have received and the faith which was delivered to me as they have ever been. I am aware of one or two men who have questioned the doctrinal validity of the truth. Quite frankly, I have no desire to answer it in any kind of formal manner. I feel there is an inner sense of responsibility that each of us somehow feels as a pastor to keep all the other brethren in line and to somehow guard the doctrinal purity of our faith that we feel we must inspect and protect our brethren from any that might be among us who would be erring from the straight and narrow.

Brother Ouellette, I frankly believe you and I are too old to do much changing at this point. I am appreciative of your brotherly watch care. I recall many years ago when you invited me to preach for you on a Wednesday evening. You took me for a ride and told me that the primary reason for which you had invited me was to address a rumor you had heard from my sister-in-law, Linda Hyles (Murphrey). She had given my name in answer to a query from you as to who might take her father's place at First Baptist Church when his place was vacated.

You told me that you felt that I was not the man for the job. I agreed wholeheartedly with you at that time and suggested that you might be a much better choice. At that time, I was meeting with Brother Hyles every Thursday to be tutored in this ministry. I resigned the staff at the church after three years of being tutored, feeling that it would have to be God's decision—not man's decision—as to who took this pulpit. I appreciated your watch care for me at that time,

your open and frank concern about the welfare of this ministry, and your assessment of my unworthiness to take such a position. Likewise, I genuinely appreciate your watch care and concern for my ministry at this time, your assessment of my doctrinal integrity, and your evaluation that I have fallen short once again in your sight. I apologize if I have not measured up to the full stature of what you expect from me. I feel that I don't measure up to my own expectations, let alone those of somebody older and wiser than I.

God knew what He was getting when He got me. He got a passionate young man who has sold himself to serve God with all his heart, soul, mind, and strength. The only thing I can give God is myself. I can't give you to Him, and I can't protect you for Him. I can give me to God, and that is all. There is not much of me to give to God, but He does have all of me. That includes my mistakes, my imperfections, the warts, and the scars that I have physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually—and might I add, doctrinally.

I would never care to enter into a debate doctrinally with my peers. First of all, I spent nearly 25 years in the classroom, and even more importantly, in the privacy of study. The commentaries, encyclopedias, manuals, study books, study Bibles, and especially the Spirit of God were my companions for those nearly 25 years of study. While I do not feign myself as any kind of a scholar, I do consider myself a Bible student.

I felt that the sermon, *For Christ's Sake*, was a very pointed message which turned a magnifying glass on only one aspect of the mind of God with respect to His holiness and His infinite hatred for sin and perhaps His emotional feelings as indicated and validated through the abundance of Scriptures describing such. It was in no way a complete doctrinal treatise regarding salvation, nor did it balance His one particular emotion with that of His love, His mercy, His compassion, His infinite happiness, His infinite devotion, or His complete sovereignty.

It will take eternity for us to begin to comprehend the infinity of God. I quite readily admit a puny little sermon of approximately 75 minutes in length is not going to paint God in any light except a dim light. Neither will it complete any of His work except in the most unfinished manner. My sole attempt in the sermon was to stir the hearts of man within the context of the holiness of God in order to motivate man to be the ambassadors that God has enlisted us and commanded us to be. Beyond that, it is hardly a thorough treatise on any singular doctrine, let alone the broad expanse on the landscape of God's complete totality of perfection. I most certainly understand that point.

As far as containing doctrinal errors, Brother Ouellette, let's be frank and honest with each other. Any single sermon of yours, of mine, or of any one of our preacher brethren could be dissected and analyzed to such a degree to find significant, if not serious, doctrinal flaws.

Many years ago, you felt compelled to conform to the pressures of a few men on the

Dr. R.B. Ouellette

Page 3

January 3, 2007

Fundamentalist Conference. You chose to walk away from them and their coercion. Please don't fall victim to the very same spirit of superiority and arrogance. You are a better man than that.

I have been preaching and teaching God's Word for 32 years. I certainly have much to learn and upon which to improve. The longer I preach, the less qualified I feel and the more inadequate I appear. However, I have watched our fundamental movement take a very distant back seat in church growth and world missions. I am embarrassed at what I have seen overall. We have become a movement of anger, critique, arrogance, and pride. We seemingly love to point out the individual flaws in others. All the while, we are failing in the greater works our Lord admonished and promised us to perform.

Brother Ouellette, we have much work to do. Anyone who takes a microscopic look at one aspect of any one of us might be disappointed. If I take your recent letter and our meetings of years ago as an evaluation of you and your ministry, I would be sorely disappointed with you. However, I saw the larger picture of your life and words and asked you to speak at Pastors' School. I did not ask you to speak on ethics or ministry critiquing. I asked you to speak on church growth.

For good reason, you declined my invitation twice. I would still want you to address the Pastors' School delegates regarding church growth, but I would hope we could respect one another personally and professionally to not entangle ourselves with unnecessary debate. Perhaps you disagree, and that is your prerogative; but I too have opinions, and yours are not better or wiser than mine simply because they are yours. Your opinions of my sermons are just that—your opinions. I disagree with your assessment, but I appreciate your works as a church builder.

Fundamentalism desperately needs a reality check as to where it is going and what purpose it is serving. Another 20 years of the nonsense I have witnessed, and I fear we will be nothing more than what the Presbyterians and Methodists are today!

I really do not want to address this particular matter any further. Both of us have much more to accomplish. Thank you for the letter. May God's richest of blessings be with you.

Sincerely,



Jack Schaap

JS/bb