

# "SILENCE IS CONSENT"<sup>1</sup>

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Sometimes the observation contained in the title is true. Ezekiel spoke of silence constituting consent and gave the solemn responsibility of the watchman to warn of danger. Loss may come, but when the watchman warns, he releases himself from bloodguiltiness (Ezek. 33:1-9). The concept is not exclusively an Old Testament demand (Acts 20:26-32). In an article on the "Importance of Loving Truth," Johnny Ramsey wrote, "We cannot genuinely claim to stand up for the sacred text while we allow error to run rampant."<sup>2</sup>

The desire for fellowship with other Christians must not override the truth, which serves as the sole basis for such fellowship from the beginning (John 17:20-23). Yet, the invitation comes:

*Good news! Mark your calendar for April 29. We are hosting the area wide "Growing By Sharing" series at Harding Academy. This is an excellent opportunity for the congregations in the area to come together to fellowship and worship. Our speaker for this event is Steve Flatt, president of Lipscomb University.*<sup>3</sup>

In a previous article,<sup>4</sup> the unreliability of Steve Flatt as a preacher of God's word was detailed. In particular, Flatt's alignment with Rubel Shelly was given. Additionally, Shelly's congregation, Family of God at Woodmont Hills/Woodmont Hills Church of Christ, advanced the Billy Graham Crusade in Nashville last June. Then, following efforts to warn brethren of the danger of having Flatt come to Memphis, an article appeared in the host congregation's bulletin written by Rubel Shelly himself.<sup>5</sup>

The Lord told his disciples wherein the fellowship of the faithful may be found, "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7). The light is the light of God's word. The Psalmist wrote, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path....The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple. (Psa. 119:105, 130). All who honor the teaching of the word of God may enjoy fellowship with God and one another. But, denominational division is sinful, standing condemned in God's word (I Cor. 1:10) and a work of darkness with which Christians must have no fellowship. Paul wrote,

“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Eph. 5:11).

Sir Edmond Burke reportedly said, “All that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing.” Some say, “Silence is golden,” but sometimes it is just plain yellow. And, Robert Louis Stevenson wrote, “The cruelest lies are often told in silence.”

The premise “silence is consent” has many implications this year in reference to the Growing By Sharing. Perhaps there will be even within the host congregation someone who will not be content to silently sit by and let the plans to bring Steve Flatt to Memphis find fulfillment through his finances and his family.

If “silence is consent,” then this new direction being taken by the host congregation of this year’s Growing By Sharing will be heard loudly and clearly.

## ENDNOTES

1“Invasion of the ‘Sludge Media’” in *Family Talk, The Lord’s Family in Germantown*, Dave Phillips, ed. (Feb. 25, 2001), 34:8, p. 3.

2*Vigil*, Barry Elliott, ed. (Jan. 2001), 29:1, p. 1.

3“Our Work Together” in *Family Talk, The Lord’s Family in Germantown*, Dave Phillips, ed. (Jan. 21, 2001), 34:3, p. 6.

4“Is It Nothing to You, All Ye that Pass By?” in *Good News from Getwell*, Gary McDade, ed. (Mar. 26, 2001), 42:13, pp. 2-3.

5“Spiritual Considerations...” in *Family Talk, The Lord’s Family in Germantown*, Dave Phillips, ed. (Apr. 1, 2001), 34:13, p. 3.