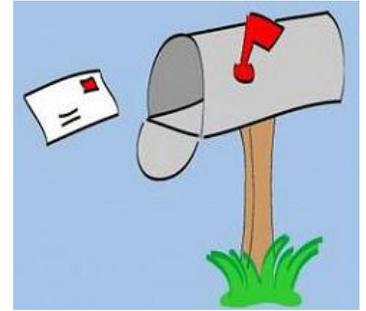


## **“An Open Letter”: So It Does Not Happen Yet Again**

It was in my earliest years as a pastor that I was compelled *and obligated* to re-examine my beliefs about re-marriage. The impact on that young couple was so unpleasant that I had to make sure that I was right – that the Scriptures actually taught what I had put into practice!  
[1]



It is those kinds of experiences which force one to think and re-think. I was not looking for a way out of the unpleasantness, but clarity and confidence that such was taught in the Scriptures. If it was, then how can I best obey that truth and still do a better job in working through it with yet others down the road in such a way that I have a better potential of still ministering to them after they are married. [2]

When people, like this newly saved young couple looking to begin life together, now as believers, are hurt and injured, it is time and our obligation *to make sure we have it right*.

Other ministry experiences came along which equally forced and obligated me to make sure I had it right, not have it as I might like. That requires a level of awareness that we are dealing with people, God’s people, people who have personal worth and dignity in God's eyes.

**As those in authority and positions of power, we had better be right when we handle people.**

**To use or abuse them, as those in positions of authority and power, is reprehensible!**

**To use and abuse the Scriptures to justify and excuse the mishandling and manhandling people is shameful.**

**To misuse and abuse the appropriate process, policies, and procedures designed to ensure fairness and equity is discreditable.**

As ministries, local churches, pastors, deacons, administrators, elders, presidents, board members . . . .

**The desire to do what is right and not what we may like requires the input of others who will tell us what we need to hear, not what we want to hear.**

**We had better be sure that we have it right when we handle others!**

It is those experiences with . . .

- that young couple
- members who leave
- fellow pastors, we have to correct
- employees we have to honestly lay off
- members who are fairly or unfairly critical
- employees we must “fire”
- those involved in sexual immorality
- good people who have become disillusioned with leadership
- those who poorly serve in their position
- fellow pastors / deacons whose families are not in order

. . . that cause us to ask ourselves ***and make sure that we are right!***

A variety of experiences cause one to think and re-think what ministries, churches, pastors, deacons, college presidents, board members, elders, leaders do and don't do, how they handle people and specifically God's people.

In this case, it forces and obligates me to think and re-think the nature and application of church discipline, dismissal from membership, Scriptural proof-texting or twisting, contentious disagreements, “sowing discord,” the appropriate attending to process, the unfettered power of those in charge, membership vs. ownership, the biblical role of “the church,” the misuse and abuse of Matthew 18, equity and fairness, etc.

### **That Ought Never To Happen Again!**

**“What happened to the Trump presidential campaign and his subsequent administration after the president was duly elected by the American people must never happen again,”**

How many times has the President himself made that comment?

[Not here to wade into that debate.]

In hearing such a comment, some may believe that there is more needed than just the guarantee that it will not be done again by anyone in the future. They believe that what has happened needs to be brought out into the light and properly addressed now. Nevertheless, even if wrong is not properly addressed now, maybe it will prevent it from happening again!

Whether you are in this-or-that political camp, what we can all agree on is that when anyone or any group abuses power and authority, one of the purposes of standing up and speaking out is so that it never happens – and again – and again. Maybe it will stop, or at least pause, those in ministry to re-think about handling and manhandling God's people!

That requires some honest evaluation. It involves thinking and re-thinking. It requires those who tell us what we need to hear, not what we want to hear. That means painful, hard, lengthy discussions, of which ***most are unwilling to engage in***, before, during, ***and even after!*** --- Trust me, I know!

Somewhere, there needs to those (Bari, Akin, Laverly, Julie Roys, et. al) who say – enough is enough! This madness needs to end!



1. <https://thebiblechapterbychapter.files.wordpress.com/2020/09/an-open-letter-think.pdf>

2. I realized and understood that they (and others) are still going to get married, if not by me, by another. If my position was biblical and I could not re-marry them and others, was there a way that I can still have a ministry in their lives. That may not be possible, but my obligation would still have been to seek that end.

In my previous post, I indicated that my position, and the church's position changed concerning marriage and re-marriage. Much more could be said on this issue alone, but that is not the purpose of this post. I will say that although some ministries, pastors, churches, and members may not agree (We did lose a couple of families because of our change of position.), I am able to explain what we believe and why we believed it. We don't have to agree, but we do need to think and re-think.

3. <https://pulpitandpen.org/2019/01/09/read-this-blistering-open-letter-to-james-macdonald/>