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Richard Jordan  
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COPY

cc: Ivan Burgener  
Paul Sadler

May 9, 2000

Dear Mr. Jordan,

Greetings in Christ.

1. I appreciated our short discussion last Saturday during the Bible Conference and enjoyed the message you delivered on forgiveness. I also had a discussion with Dan Gross who encouraged me to contact you directly regarding the many long-standing reports concerning your reputation, consistent stories from people that I know and respect.
2. Because they involve your integrity, please confirm, deny or correct the information in the following stories as I have reconstructed them.
3. Before you were hired by the Berean Bible Society you were actively promoting the doctrine that the King James Bible was the perfectly preserved word of God for the English speaking people. You advocated that there were no errors in the English translation of the KJV as we have it today. You believed that if someone corrects the translation based on the Greek that they are in effect altering God's word. You were instructed and greatly influenced by a Bible teacher in Pensacola, FL named Peter Ruckman who was a very strong advocate of that position. At some point you came into conflict with Ruckman because of your views about mid-Acts dispensationalism. A small group of other men were dismissed from a Bible School that Peter Ruckman operated because of their mid-Acts position, among those were Art Watkins and E.C. Moore. You did not leave with these men.
4. For a time you pastored a church in Selma, AL which held strongly to the view that the KJV is the perfectly preserved word of God. You were also active as a speaker at Bible conferences and other activities in Alabama and neighboring states. Some time in the late 70's or early 80's you made contact with C.R. Stam. Eventually you were asked to join the BBS as its president. At some point you made an agreement with Mr. Stam that you, as the president of the BBS, would not make an issue of your position on the nature of the KJV. There is a tape

recorded meeting of the Berean Bible Fellowship board of Feb. 5, 1988 on which you state that such an agreement existed and you did in fact break that agreement. Pastor Stam believed strongly that the KJV was a very reliable translation and he too defended its authority but never went to the point of claiming it to be a perfectly preserved translation. Likewise, in his writings he frequently suggested alternate translations of words and even would go to the point of suggesting that some passages may not have read in the original as they do in the KJV (e.g. Rom. 8:1)

5. In the early 80's you began a Bible training program at the Berean Bible Society which eventually developed into what today is Grace School of the Bible. While Mr. Stam was aware that these classes were going on, he was not aware of all that was being taught. It was in these classes that you were teaching this group of men that the KJV was the perfectly preserved word of God for the English speaking people and that there was no need to alter the translation based on the Greek. There were apparently other doctrines as well that caused controversy, particularly on the nature of prayer, but they turned out to be secondary issues when compared to the amount of furor that arose over the nature of the KJV.
6. Eventually news was filtering back to individuals in the leadership of the BBS that you were in fact teaching that the KJV was a perfectly preserved Bible, the translation of which could not be altered. The issue went beyond the choice between the Textus Receptus vs. the Westcott and Hort text but included the actual translation of the words into English. Pastor Stam and the board of the BBS learned of what you were teaching through letters and telephone calls which they received from individuals that had heard you say such things at various conferences and speaking engagements. People were also learning these things through some of the men you were training in your school at the BBS.
7. I was told that at one point Ted Fellows, who was attending your classes, related to Dick Ware, the pastor at the time in Genoa City, some of the things he had been taught in your classes. Dick recognized immediately that these were problematic doctrines. Among those doctrinal issues was the above mentioned teaching about the nature of the KJV.
8. At first Pastor Stam did not accept the stories that you were teaching the doctrine of a perfectly preserved KJV. He chose initially to ignore the reports. Because the number of stories were mounting he decided to confront you on the issue. At that time you reassured Pastor Stam that you believed essentially the same as he did about the nature of the KJV. In order to prove your sincerity he asked you to write an article for the **Berean Searchlight** stating your position. The result of that meeting was the well-known article of November 1986 entitled "Reverence Due the King James Version of the Bible."
9. Soon after the article was published there was a meeting of the BBS board to discuss these issues of doctrine, particularly the issue of the KJV. At that meeting

you apologized for all the trouble that the organization had experienced because of you. You seemed to be truly contrite and repentant. According to Paul Sadler anyone observing the meeting would come away believing that you admitted to having caused division as a result of your teachings, that you were sorry you had done so, and that you would try not to further the controversy. A letter was written by Pastor Sadler essentially stating those facts. You and the other board members read the letter before it was mailed. No one contested the content of that letter.

10. At the 1986 Thanksgiving Day conference in Riverdale, IL there was a heated discussion over the **Searchlight** article. There were several men that had been influenced by your teaching who were upset because they felt that the article denied the very things which they had been taught by you. At one point your wife approached you with the article and confronted you saying, "This is not what you believe." You were overheard to have replied, "These words don't mean what you think they do." You were also reported to have said to some of the men that supported you, "Don't believe everything you hear, I believe what I've always believed."
11. When the story of these statements reached Pastor Stam he now felt that the issue went beyond the doctrine but involved a credibility problem as well. The issue had now become public and tempers and tensions were escalating. Pastor Stam again met with you several times after the November conference to discuss the matter. After those meetings he related to Paul Sadler that you talked for hours and yet he (Stam) still could not figure out exactly what your position was.
12. It was reported to me by Paul Sadler that Pastor Stam discovered you used the BBS audio duplicating equipment to produce a set of tapes that very clearly outlined your position on the KJV. You also produced a second series on the issue at a later time (which I believe is the set I listened to) in which your terminology was much more reserved.
13. Eventually everything reached a head in August 1987. At this time Pastor Stam was convinced that you could not be trusted and that you did in fact teach that the KJV was a perfectly preserved Bible which could not be corrected. Pastor Stam also strongly disagreed with your teaching on prayer. At that board meeting it was decided that you would be separated from the BBS. There was division among the board members in that some wanted simply to accept your resignation and others demanded that you be fired in order to demonstrate how serious they believed your actions were. The side for termination won over and that ended your relationship with the BBS.
14. At some point after your termination from the BBS some of the people that were on its mailing list began to receive unsolicited literature from you. As the news of this filtered back to the BBS leadership it became clear that you obtained these names from the BBS office. When confronted with this fact you would respond

that friends of those receiving the mailings had requested that certain names be put on your list. However, there was clear evidence that these names were gathered through records in the office of the BBS. They deduced this by the fact that there were several accounts of individuals whose record on the BBS mailing list had minor errors in the spelling of their name, a middle initial, the title they used or some other such thing. When they received literature from you the same errors were on the addresses of the mailings they received. A story such as this was related to me by a friend. Many more have told me that they never signed up to receive information from you, but their names were on the BBS mailing list and they assumed that is where you got their addresses. No one claims that you left the BBS with all the information on the mailing list, but a great number are convinced that you took names and address of a select group of individuals from the organizations records.

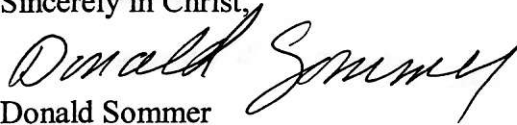
15. I was told by Pastor Sadler that Pastor Stam actually talked to the postmaster in Chicago and he was told that it is a federal offense for an employee to take information from an organization's mailing list when he leaves the organization. The postmaster encouraged the BBS to prosecute, but after discussion they believed that it would be an unscriptural act to bring a fellow believer to court.
16. The final story in this saga revolves around an attempt by some of your supporters within the Berean Bible Fellowship to try to influence the vote for board members to favor your doctrinal position. There had been a great deal of controversy after your termination from the BBS as to whether or not you should be allowed to speak at the 1988 summer conference of the BBF. There was a faction on the board that wanted the BBF to be controlled by those who supported you personally and doctrinally. Apparently a plan was devised by an individual named Ralph Balog (now deceased) to use a political technique known as "bullet voting." He composed a letter in which he encouraged people that were not members of the BBF to join the organization and to vote for only one of three names on the ballot in the pastoral category even though there were two spots open on the board in that category. The one they were requested to vote for was Tom Bruscha who was supportive of you personally and doctrinally. Ivan Burgener shared with me copies of two letters in which Balog described the plan or in which he encouraged individuals to vote according to his suggestion. According to Ivan, his son-in-law was at your house during the spring of 1988 when he overheard a group of men supportive of you discussing bullet voting in your presence. He did not know exactly what they were talking about, but after the plan was later exposed he realized that they must have been discussing the idea Ralph Balog was promoting.
17. Although Balog's plan might technically be just a political technique and not illegal, it was viewed by many within the BBF as an unethical way of trying to influence an election in a Christian organization. When Balog's plan was exposed Tom Bruscha removed his name from the ballot. The BBF board removed Ralph Balog's name from the ballot and charged him with "official misconduct." This



incident apparently influenced the opinion of many people against you. During the 1988 summer BBF conference you did not show up for the message you had been scheduled to deliver, however it was reported that you were at the conference grounds during the conference and met with individuals that attended. It was reported that you wrote two very unkind letters to Ivan Burgener and the BBF board which were read at the conference grounds. I was told that some of your supporters went to your home during that week and earnestly requested you to apologize for those letters but you refused.

18. As I said above, this letter was written because I was encouraged by Dan Gross to find out if the things that have been said about you were true. I am presenting this information to you and requesting you to respond to it, either to confirm, deny or correct its accuracy.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Donald Sommer". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Donald Sommer