

# Correspondence

**From: Mr. Mark Punford,  
BRF member.**

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Dear Editor,

I was not a little horrified to learn of the curiouser and curiouser changes overtaking both the Fellowship and the Journal. Someone somewhere has obviously managed to think of six impossible things before breakfast!! Surely the changes in the organisational structure result from motives not in keeping with the spirit and original intention behind the inauguration of the BRF ? Moreover, they would appear to be illegal changes that take no account of proxy votes for involuntary absentees. How come a resolution of ammendment has been passed by a committee member? And how come such an ammendment involves a tightening of the grounds for access to membership contrary to the original

proposed loosening of which members were apprised prior to the conference I was sad to have had (unavoidably) to miss?

Whatever one's views on membership requirement, the tightening was not preceded by an official memo to members not in attendance. Worst of all, the tightening requires the logical impossibility of contemporaneous subscription to the statements NOT common to the *Three Forms of Unity* and *Westminster Standards* which latter incidentally, are compromised with respect to the decrees and the Amyraldian influences.

To crown it all, the British Reformed Journal, an excellent semi-technical journal, popular with many thoughtful Christians across the globe, is now to be illegally replaced by a virtual penny dreadful replete with youth and fun for all the family pages, yet stealing the highly inappropriate name for such trivia from the beloved journal it haa conveniently ousted. One does not need to be a prophet to predict that you will lose



many subscribers to gain only those who like their theology "Living Bible" or "Daily Tabloid" Style. Just who are all these people who want a dumbed down rag-mag? Surely not the original founders of the Fellowship? What if the majority who do not want these changes only did not vote due to the non existence of proxy voting, so that a minority got their way? This is surely an illegal alteration contrary to the spirit of the Fellowship. It can only be a politically motivated expediency manoeuvre as no one in any of the major theological factions would want a dumbed-down magazine, however much it might promote their particular hobby horse. There is no other comparable academic journal in philistine Britain coming from an orthodox High Calvinistic perspective and to destroy it for the sake of a reformed ho ho ! version of "Buzz" is, in my view, criminal. Forever we hear grumbles in modern Christendom to the effect that the King James Version or this book or that journal is too difficult, but as the Marxist historian Christopher Hill pointed out, the common man had no problem in Bunyan's Day due to the quality of the material on which they were raised.

Around the bonfire plain folk met for in depth bible studies and sophisticated debate. One should educate UP not DOWN. Far more educated then were they than now. Imagine someone complaining, to the editor of "Mind" or some other learned journal that it was too difficult or that it ought to contain youth pages and quizzes etc !!!

In the light of these considerations, if these insane decisions cannot be lawfully reversed via an extraordinary meeting being convened then I urge the formation of the British Reformed Journal and Fellowship (continuing). I, and many others, have benefitted enormously from the Fellowship and Journal without which I would still be believing in common grace knowing nothing of the historical origins or debates surrounding this heresy largely imbibed by default under a cloak of apparent orthodoxy. Think also of the work yet to be done in helping the myriad devotees of moderate, paradoxical, double reference atonement theorising, four-point and other calvinists-so-called, to come to the full orb'd truth and to leave behind their common grace and hyper-Spurgeonism and their blue-pencilled Pinkism, Fullerism, and I don't know what else. No profound journal spells no profound witness or contending for the

faith once delivered to the saints. I shall laugh at the new magazine and then toss it aside in disgust. How about you unwilling editor?

### Editor's Response:

First, this editor was always "unwilling", and originally only took up the position in 1994 because no-one else would touch it.

Regarding the "tightening" of the Doctrinal Basis, a rider clause now footnotes Clause 2 of the Basis, in an attempt to obviate the problems Mr. Punford and others have found. Clause 2 itself, was devised by a non-BRF member in private correspondence to Allen Baird, then picked up and utilized last-minute by Committee member John Clarke as an ammendment to the Committee's recommendations, a move which involved him in effectively dissenting from the Committee's recommendations, which as a Committee member he could not legally do. I myself had previously resigned from the Committee in order to propose ammendments or outright oppose the new proposed Constitution, and to avoid being forcibly bound to the majority position on the Committee. It was Mr. Clarke who emphasised to me that this was the rule on May 19th, as a result of which I resigned.

As to the absence of right to proxy voting, I do not know whether such is legal or not. But it meant that out of about 60 BRF members, only about 20 were able to get to the Biannual General Meeting, and the new Constitution won the day 14-6. Now, up to four members, who to my knowledge did not want the changes, were unable to be present due to unavoidable exigencies. If granted a proxy vote the result would have been 14-10, and the proposed changes would have failed to carry with the necessary 2 thirds majority. Hence the new set-up is in position by a whisker of a default.

The new BRJ has to reflect the changes, hence its totally new style and orientation, as it will now aim at a more popular market, and has to compete with a plethora of similar-content magazines in that realm, whereas hitherto the old BRJ has been sole occupant of a "niche" market. Several dismayed and disappointed folk have already resigned membership or cancelled subscriptions and donations to the BRF and BRJ. The new Council and its sub-committees face a big challenge in the months to come.