

A DIAGNOSIS WORTH CONSIDERING

We are not the only religious body being troubled by those promoting major changes to the faith, worship and practice of the of our churches. The problem is also being faced in virtually every denomination that has any desire to honor Scripture and be guided thereby. Among the Evangelical writers who has a good insight into the causes driving this obsession for change is Os Guinness, protege of the late Dr. Francis Schaeffer.

In his book, **Prophetic Untimeliness: A Challenge to the Idol of Relevance**, Guinness identifies four steps that will end disastrously in unfaithfulness and irrelevance:

"Something modern is assumed (step one). As a consequence, **something traditional is abandoned** (step two), and **everything else is adapted** (step three). The outcome is that **what remains is not only adapted but absorbed by the modern assumptions. It is assimilated without any decisive remainder**. The result is worldliness, or Christian capitulation to some aspect of the culture of its day" (pp. 61-62).

To appreciate the wisdom of Guinness' diagnosis one need only observe what is happening in those congregations of the church of Christ that have embarked on their journey of change.

* They assume that Postmodernism is a world view that the church must accept and accommodate. They assume that contemporary folks will not listen to nor accept the simple preaching of the old time gospel. They assume that entertainment is the best way to win the hearts of people to Christ. They assume that God will accept their assumptions.

* These assumptions lead them to abandon the public proclamation of the gospel for story telling entertainment and drama. They abandon serious Bible teaching for pop psychology, worldly wisdom and human interest stories. They abandon acappella praise for accompanied by musical instruments. They abandon congregation praise for the entertainment of choirs, solos and singing groups. They abandon the seriousness of the sacred memorial of Christ's death for a joyful celebration with a fellowship meal. They abandon the male leadership model ordained by God for that of the Feminist movement.

* In time, virtually every aspect of their congregations' faith and worship is adapted to the standard of the flourishing mega churches of the Neo-Evangelical world.

* They forsake their quest to restore the ancient faith of the church, they lose their identity as churches of Christ, they disassociate themselves by deleting church of Christ from their names. They find their fellowship with Christian Churches and other Protestant bodies. Eventually they will have neither part nor lot with the brotherhood of churches of Christ. For how can two walk together except they have agreed? (Amos 3:3). They have departed from the faith (I Tim. 4:1), they have made shipwreck of the faith (I Tim. 1:19).

Let those who are wise note well that the wise doctor's diagnosis fits our change agents to a T! JHW