

NEW WAYS OF LOOKING AT THE BIBLE

To justify the changes they would make to the faith, worship and practices of the Lord's church, our change agents have developed a new hermeneutic, a new way of interpreting God's Word. Their attempts to discover a new way of interpreting the Word that would give credence to the new kind of church and worship they advocate is neither new nor unique. Each group mentioned below has an agenda that cannot be implemented if people are left to read and understand their Bibles in the normal, traditional way that believers have read it over the centuries.

To successfully promote their church and their system of belief, **Catholic clergy** cannot hand people a generic Bible and urge them to read it. This is true because the Bible's message runs counter to virtually everything unique to that denomination. Thus they have created an elaborate system of Catholic theology. Their own specialists have produced doctored editions of the Bible and developed a hermeneutic that makes that which is false look true and that which is true look false.

Jehovah's Witness teachers cannot make their case with a standard translation of the Bible and the general hermeneutical approach used by most folks through the ages. They too have given us an altered translation of the Bible that conveniently teaches their peculiar beliefs. They have developed a system of interpretation that will help their adherents see things the way the leaders of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Association wish them to see it.

Black theologians who are also racial militants are committed to an Afrocentric view of things and a "Liberation Theology." With their hermeneutic they can dismiss Paul's advice to Christian slaves to be obedient to their masters (Eph. 6:5) as unworthy and are unacceptable. They can neutralize all the verses about enduring persecution and abuse and justify violence in overthrowing governments and opponents to gain political and economic power.

Feminists who make any pretense at being Christian must find a new way of looking at the Word of God. All those verses about wives being in subjection to their husbands and men being the leaders of the church stand as obstacles to their agenda (Eph.5:22; I Tim. 2:11-12).. Hence they too have developed a new hermeneutic and even their own annotated editions of the Bible.

Leaders of the Gay and Lesbian movement face tremendous obstacles in gaining public acceptance and approval for their decadent life style. To claim respectability, a branch of their people are dedicated to infiltrating churches and forcing their way into leadership positions. The Metropolitan Community Church is their own homosexual denomination. They have their own theologians who are turning out books and articles telling the world that folks have misunderstood all those Bible verses that condemn homosexual conduct as unnatural, abominable and wicked. They have a new hermeneutic by which they conclude that the sin of the men of Sodom was inhospitality and violence, not homosexuality. Their interpretation paints the Apostle Paul as a homophobic sinner while sodomites are really saintly lovers. By it they can turn the pure love of Christ for his disciples into erotic love between Jesus and John.

The change movement at work among our brethren is faced with the same kind of problems the above groups faced. So long as folks rely on traditional methods and tools of interpretation they will not be able to implement their change agenda. So some scholarly souls embedded in our Christian Universities have brought forth a "new hermeneutic" that will allow them to sell their package to undiscerning hearers. Verses that for two millennium have been understood to forbid women from being preachers and teachers over men in God's church, now can actually approve of them so doing. Verses that in the past condemned denominationalism can now be read to approve of that system. Scripture that formally taught Christians to "speak one to another, singing and making melody with their hearts unto God (Eph. 5:19) can now be read to mean choirs, soloists and instrumental music. Verses that once meant that Christians commune on the first day of the week can now be interpreted to mean on any day or on special occasions (Acts 20:7).

As Solomon said, "There is nothing new under the sun."(Eccle. 1:9). Or as Sam the farmer said, What goes around comes around. JHW