

NO MAN IS AN ISLAND

Centuries ago John Donne wrote, "No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main..." These poignant words of the poet are applicable to each Christian, every preacher and elder and every congregation of the church of Christ. We do not stand or exist alone; we are part of the universal kingdom of Christ.

In the universal sense of the word, the church of Christ is the great family of God's saved children, scattered throughout the nations of the world (I Tim. 3:15). A favorite metaphor of Paul was to describe the church universal as the spiritual body of Christ (I Cor. 12:13). Speaking of the body of Christ, he wrote, "and whether one member suffereth, all the members suffer with it; or one members is honored, all the members rejoice with it" (I Cor. 12:26).

This means that each of us is affected when danger or harm comes to any brother or any congregation, anywhere in the world. The problems plaguing a congregation in New York impacts the church in California or Florida. The turmoil caused by a Christian School in California or Texas will spread like ripples on a lake until those in distant places feel the impact.

Today scores of congregations in virtually every state have been invaded, captured and brought under the control of men who, although still claiming membership, are no longer loyal to the church of Christ;. They no longer respect the principles of faith and practice that are central to her identity. Among the churches already lost are many of our largest and wealthiest congregations. No less than three of our Christian Universities have also fallen under the influences of these agents of change. While these tragic facts may be news to some, they are well know to others.

Those who recognize the problem of the change movement are of two categories. A handful see the problem to be not just a local phenomenon but an attack against the entire body of Christ. As such, it demands the response of every faithful Christian in defense of the Christ's sacred body and they have armed themselves for the conflict and are fighting the good fight of faith (I Tim. 6:12).

The majority however seem only concerned to protect only their own congregation. That other congregations, schools or mission outposts are being brought into captivity to error, while unfortunate, elicits no repose beyond shaking the head or an occasional warning to their own flock.

Our most pressing task is to remind and convince faithful brethren of the truth John Donne's word. We are no island, we are part of a world-wide brotherhood of Christians. It is not enough that we do not have the problem in our home congregation. If any congregation, in any place, is endangered it is my concern. It affects me. My response must be more than for my own congregation. I must help to protect other churches around the world. We dare not wait until the promoters of change come knocking on our door. We must mount our defense of the Cause of Christ, now, before it appears at our doorstep. We must invest the necessary funds today that will help protect the church, at home and abroad. We must act now to protect our mission outposts. Once they have been captured, it is will be too little to late to try to reclaim them.

Every brother and sister and every congregation is invited and urged to join hands with us in our efforts to educate and inform the entire brotherhood of the danger the change agents pose. We need your help to place Christianity: Then and Now in the hands of every preacher and elder in our brotherhood. We need to get it into the hands of teachers in our Christian Schools and especially every preacher student. It matters not if the preacher we salvage or the church we save be in Australia or Andalusia, Alabama. The important thing is that we have acted to save from harm the precious body of Christ.

To sit in silence while evil men attack a sister congregation is a sin of omission, not only against Christ and his church but against ourselves as well. For it is to allow harm to the body of which we are part. "No man is an island." JHW