

CHRISTIANITY: THEN AND NOW

JOHN WADDEY, EDITOR

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“THOU SHALT NOT JUDGE”

In addition to the prohibitions of Moses and Jesus, those who are seeking to impose their agenda of change of the Lord's church have their own set of “Thou Shalt Nots.” While their postmodern system contains numerous prohibitions, this piece will consider only their well used, “Thou shalt not judge us.” Their code is most flexible since it does not forbid them from passing critical judgements on brethren whom they classify as “traditionalists,” “patternists” and “Church of Christers.” It allows them to claim immunity and protection as they seek to draw away disciples unto themselves (Acts 20:30).

Every serious Bible student knows that the Lord's injunction against judging (Matt. 7:1) is of limited application. He judged the scribes and Pharisees to be hypocrites (Matt. 23:25). He warned us to beware of false teachers who come in sheep's clothing (Matt. 7:15). Paul judged Hymenaeus and Alexander to be brethren who had made shipwreck of the faith (I Tim. 1:19-20). John warned us to believe not every spirit or teacher because many false prophets are gone out into the world (I John 4:1). The Corinthians were reminded that they had to judge those within the church (I Cor. 5:12). The truth is we are not to judge “according to appearance,” but we are to “judge righteous judgment” (John 7:24). We are to judge others, knowing that we will be judged by the same method or manner of judgement we have followed (Luke 6:37-38). While he warns against harsh, unsympathetic judgement and unfair judgement, he teaches us to use our eyes and ears to determine if a person's conduct or message is true and beneficial or destructive. “By their fruits ye shall know them” (Matt. 7:16). Christ is the Supreme Judge who is empowered to determine who shall be saved or lost (Acts 17:30). He alone can read the hearts of men and discern their motives (Heb. 4:12-13). Our task is more like that of fruit-inspectors.

While living on earth, faithful Christians will of necessity have to make judgements. They will do so with the following in mind: They:

- Will not make hasty judgements (Ps. 116:11).
- Will not judge others on the basis of rumors or gossip (Prov. 26:20).
- Will not be harsh and unsympathetic in their decisions.
- Will not base their judgements on a person's race, financial status or his relation to himself (Deut. 1:17).
- Will never try to usurp the place of Christ in judging others
- Will judge others only as they wish themselves to be judged (Matt. 7:12).
- Will gladly alter their decision if they find they have misjudged their neighbor.
- Will not base their judgements on appearance only. They will take time to find out the facts of the case.
- Will always assume the best of their fellow-Christian until the brother's conduct forces them to judge him differently.
- Their judgements will be made on the basis of God's word, rather than personal likes and dislikes, traditions or popular opinion (John 12:48).
- When they are forced to judge another brother to be wrong, they will do so with a heavy heart (Phil. 3:18) and only after every effort has been made to reclaim him (Matt. 18:15-18).
- Whenever they can do so, without disobeying Christ, their love will cover a multitude of shortcomings and failures in their brother (I Pet. 4:8).
- When a brother, judged unworthy of our fellowship, repents, they will be the first to

embrace him and welcome him home (Luke 17:3; 15:20).

We must not allow false teachers to misuse this prohibition as a shield to cover their destructive work. While we must be careful not to be judgmental, which Christ forbids, we must judge false teachers to be dangerous to the church and the souls of men. We must reject them and warn others to do so (Rom. 16:17-18). **JHW**

A NEED YOU CAN SUPPLY

As the promoters of change continue their aggressive efforts to capture congregations of the Lord's church and impose their unscriptural agenda upon them, the need for a planned and consistent response is sorely needed. We need to have a series of seminars in every section of the nation that will address the problem and offer a reasonable and workable program of response. Ideally these meetings should be held in the large, population centers of every state. At the very least they need to be held in every region of the nation.

- Invitations should go out to the preachers and elders of every congregation within a 200 mile radius urging them to attend or to send representatives.
- Each meeting should be sponsored and directed by the elders of a faithful congregation. They would be wise to invite other brethren to work with them in designing their meeting.
- The meeting could be conducted in the meeting place of a church, on the campus of a Christian school or a camp facility.
- It would be very helpful if local brethren could provide lodging for those who come from a great distance.
- Speakers should be chosen with great care if the program is to accomplish its goal. One respected teacher would suffice, but two or three would be better. Those chosen should be mature men who have lived and served long enough to understand and discuss the changes that have crept into the church over the last 25 years. Speakers should be men of extensive Bible knowledge and broad experience in the Lord's kingdom. They absolutely must be men of moderation who love the brotherhood and enjoy the respect of their peers. Extremists and factious speakers will do harm and destroy the

effectiveness of your meeting. Ex generations and unfounded rumors must be voided.

- An agenda should be planned and adopted before hand and a strong and capable person selected to moderate the sessions. Endless talking or extraneous matters can derail your meeting.
- A possible format could be as follows:

1. An opening statement by the sponsoring church, reflecting on the seriousness of the problem and the purpose for the meeting. An exhortation should be given to all to refrain from personal attacks and to look for positive, constructive solutions to the problems. The limitations of such a gathering should be made clear as congregational autonomy must be respected.

2. **First Speaker: A Review of the Current Situation Facing the Church:** The Fundamentals of the Faith that are being challenged by the agents of change.

3. **Second Speaker: A Historical Review** showing this is a replay of the apostasy of the late 19th century.

4. **Third Speaker: The Serious Consequences of the Change Agenda to the Lord's Cause.**

5. **Fourth Speaker: Recommendations that Will Protect the Church from Further Harm.**

6. **Small Group Discussions.** These should consist of 6-8 people and should be chaired by a person capable of facilitating discussion and gathering of information. Notes of each should be taken. Questions to be discussed should include: Do we have the problem in our area? If so how extensive is it? Are those involved yet approachable and teachable? Suggestions for action in each church. Facilitators should compare their notes and produce a summary of the information gained.

7. A general meeting should be conducted as an open forum for questions relating to the change movement. A panel of older, seasoned men, respected for their knowledge and wisdom, could respond to the questions. Or one or more of your guest speakers could fill this role. It is essential that the discussion be kept to the subject of the meeting.

8. The meeting should close with a challenging exhortation to faithfulness and a determination to preserve and protect the faith that has been delivered to us.

- Each session should be taped for later review and so they can be distributed to those who could not attend .

- There should be breaks with refreshments after each lesson. Ideally the group should eat together. These social moments will give brethren a chance to mingle and get better acquainted with each other. This will help build stronger bonds of fellowship.
- Displays of materials relating to the change movement should be provided for inspection and purchase.
- With careful planning and discipline, such a program could be conducted in one day.

Strong churches, individuals or schools are needed to host these sessions in their area. Funds would be needed for speakers who are brought from afar. Would you be willing to help? Would you attend such a meeting in your area? **JHW**

“To see the ultimate destination of the change movement I encourage you to visit a Disciples of Christ Church. Observe, their reverend pastor, their female leaders, their musical band, their ecumenical program and their liberal theology. They were the change movement of a century past.” JHW

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

A century ago T. W. Phillips, Sr. of New Castle Pennsylvania authored a book that has been circulated around the world and is still read with profit. The book was entitled **The Church of Christ**. For many years the author was listed simply as “A Layman.” It went through 14 editions. Recently I read this fine old volume and was greatly impressed with the message it conveyed.

Phillips was associated with the Disciples of Christ at the time when their leaders were in the process of abandoning the idea of restoring the original faith and practice of the church of Christ. From reading his book, it is evident that the author was not ready to follow them to their predictable destination.

This book is one of the finest presentations of our plea for the restoration of the ancient faith that I have ever read. The author avoided those issues that were then wracking the brotherhood and concentrated on the grand message that every preacher of the first and second generation of our people had proclaimed from the housetops. In its 342 pages I found only three or four items that I did not heartily agree with. The book brims with good sermon material and every young preacher would do well to read it.

Those whose education and training were deficient in the historical and doctrinal background of our

movement especially need to see for themselves what that earlier generation of saints believed and preached. **JHW**

YOU OWE IT TO YOURSELF

Those who lead God’s church owe it to themselves and their followers to inform themselves about the dangers of the change movement that is sweeping through our brotherhood. The following books will provide you information needed to protect your flock from harm. **Surviving the Storms of Change (\$18); Books About the Change Movement (\$16); Liberalism: Deadly Enemy of the Church (\$9); Sacred Principles on Which We Stand (\$10); Lessons to Fortify Your Faith (\$7.50) and bound volumes of Christianity: Then & Now Vols. I, II, III, IV (\$6.50 each).** You may order all of them for \$71. Make your check to **Church of Christ Foundation and send to John Waddey, 12630 W. Foxfire Dr., Sun City West, AZ 85375.**

Elders: order a set of these for your church library. Present a set of them to your preacher with an exhortation to read them.

We need to place these in the library of every Bible training school in mission fields. A gift of \$95 will allow us to send them to a foreign school. **JHW**

GREAT NEWS

Generous support from a handful of churches and individuals has made it possible for us to add all the remaining US congregations to our mailing list. We need your support to sustain this effort in the coming months. Also we have mailed copies of our new book, **Sacred Principles on Which We Stand**, to the libraries of all our American Schools of Preaching, colleges and universities.

We would like to make our books available to preacher students for the cost of postage. To do this we need individuals who will help to underwrite the cost of printing those books. Would you be interested in helping with such an undertaking? If so let us hear from you.

Bro. Les McGalliard minister of the Oldham Lane church in Abilene, TX recently delivered three lesson that address the challenge of the change agents. His topics were Authority, Interpretation and Fellowship. You can find these excellent lessons on the Internet at <http://oldhamlane.org>. Your congregation would be benefitted by them. **JHW**

WHAT THE PROMOTERS OF CHANGE ARE DOING

A note in the Christian Chronicle announced that Abilene Christian University Press and Leafwood Publishers have a new initiative to send their books to mission fields around the world. These are the chief publishers of the Change Movement. They are mission-minded, i.e., they want to win our missionaries and outposts to their movement. They have the resources to do their destructive work. We must not leave them unchallenged. Help us get our materials to our workers abroad.

LIPSCOMB UNIVERSITY'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE CHANGE MOVEMENT

From a recent edition of New Wineskins (organ of the Change Movement) we offer the following lines from Dr. Gary Holloway, theologian, who teaches Spiritual Formation at David Lipscomb University.

“My own experience teaching in a university where 70% of the students are from a cappella Churches of Christ confirms this cultural shift away from the importance of denominational labels to a deep concern for relational and spiritual union.

It is not unusual in a typical week for our students to attend a Monday night instrumental praise worship at a local Church of Christ, a Tuesday night ecumenical teaching session at First Baptist downtown, Wednesday night church at a fairly traditional Church of Christ, and Thursday night Taize worship at a Presbyterian church- all before going home on the weekend to their parent's Church of Christ where many think we are the only Christians.” (For the full text of his article see www.wineskins.org and read Holloway's article Circle of Fire: Barton Stone and a Spiritual Model of Unity).

These Christian parents, whose faith the doctor scorns, are paying to send their children to a Christian School expecting that their faith will be strengthened and their usefulness to the church will be developed. Although his salary is paid by such folks, Bro. Holloway is laboring to undermine the faith of his students and prepare them for acceptance of denominationalism. Lipscomb, Abilene and Pepperdine are the engines driving the change movement. What will be your response? **JHW**

A CHURCH FOR ALL PEOPLE

Sad to say, some churches have limited the folks they would serve. By their very names some declare that

they exist to serve certain ethnic, social or national groups. Conversely, the church which Christ built is unique because, by design, it is a church for all people.

- There are **no social distinctions**. Paul reminded the Christians in Galatia that there are neither bond nor free persons in Christ. All are one (Gal. 3:28).
- There are **no racial distinctions**. In the same place Paul said there can be neither Jew nor Greek in the Lord's church (Gal. 3:28).
- There are **no economic distinctions**. James rebuked those Christians who discriminated against the poor and fawned upon the rich. Such behavior was totally unacceptable in Christ (Jas. 2:9).
- There are **no age distinctions**. Christ made it clear that children were welcomed in his kingdom (Matt. 19:13-14). The prophet Joel predicted that young and old alike would have a place in Messiah's kingdom (Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17).
- There are **no political affiliations or agendas** in the church of Christ. His kingdom was and is, “not of this world” (John 18:32). Christ's church is neither Republican nor Democrat. Its loyalty is to Him alone (Phil. 3:13).

When these and other negative and undesirable aspects are eliminated, we are left with pure, unadulterated Christianity. This is what we strive to be. With the Bible as our only guide and Christ as our only head, we can be the church he wants us to be. We need only trust and obey.

Share the good news. Tell your friends and neighbors about the pearl of great price you have found and invite them to come and see. **JHW**

IN CASE YOU WONDERED

The purpose of this paper is to awaken members of the churches of Christ to the danger posed to their faith and to the church by the change movement sweeping through our brotherhood. Our position is that of the overwhelming majority of our brethren prior to 1970. The men of God who inspired me were Gus Nichols, Hugo McCord, Otis Gatewood and other heroes of that generation. The gospel they preached is what our people heard, believed and obeyed in becoming Christians. It was right then and is still valid today. **JW**