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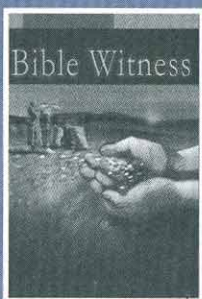
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Inside Articles: A Serious Warning to the Church Today
A Historical Account of Separation from Unbelief
Are Biblical Separation and Ecumenism Complementary?
Identifying Truth from Error
Seven Spiritual Blessings of Separation



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A SERIOUS WARNING to the CHURCH TODAY

Wang Ming Tao



Wang Ming Tao (1900-1991) was known as China's "Man of Iron," who suffered 23 years of imprisonment by the Communist government for his uncompromising defence of the Gospel.

The writer has repeatedly written to repudiate the wrong teachings of liberals and modernists and warn believers to guard against these seducing, false teachers and their false teachings. In recent years, it is indeed most heartening to see many believers being gradually able to differentiate between Biblical truths and fabricated, false doctrines. It is also most heartening to see many Bible-believing Christians in many places having already separated themselves from these seducing, false teachers and from the churches or associations under their control.

On the other hand, we have seen a most deplorable phenomenon: some Bible-believing Christians, though having discerned between truth and error, are still associating with these false teachers who preach false doctrines and with the churches and associations dominated by them. If these believers had not been able to discern the error of false teachings, I would not have blamed them in the least. But now, despite having clearly seen how wrong and how dangerous the false teachings of these false teachers are, they still associate themselves with these false teachers and the groups under their control. This is indeed most unpardonable.

Are these believers the only ones who do such a thing? Are not many workers for God and many leaders of so-called doctrinally sound churches also doing the same? Have we not often seen many preachers and church leaders, who profess to be doctrinally sound, go to participate in one mass meeting or another convened by the liberals? Have not many fundamental preachers joined hands with so-

called "social gospel" leaders in promoting all kinds of joint ventures? Have not many conservative churches often invited liberal leaders as lecturers and counsellors? Have we not often seen many believers and preachers, who profess to be evangelical, rally to the support of the liberal leaders as soon as the latter initiate some sort of movement? And have we not often seen so-called doctrinally sound churches sending students to theological seminaries to receive "modernist" education at the hands of liberal teaching staff?

All these are unfaithful acts in the sight of God. For the false teachings of the liberals confuse the Word of God and are at enmity with God. To unite with liberals is tantamount to rebellion against God. It is also very harmful to man. Uniting with the liberals may enhance their prestige and status, but it directly or indirectly has evil effects on many doctrinally weak and uninformed believers.

If the leaders of a church, though doctrinally sound, God-fearing and God-loving, nevertheless fail to completely separate themselves from the liberals, that church will never reach the stage of fervent spirituality. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (1 Corinthians 5:6). For the leaders of a good church to participate in a mass meeting called by liberals, or to join hands with liberals in promoting joint ventures, or to invite liberals to lecture, or to introduce into the church all kinds of movements and techniques initiated by liberals, is tantamount to mixing a new lump with old yeast. The result will never be good.

Nothing is more welcome by the Devil than sending young men and women, who fervently love the Lord and desire to serve Him, to

theological seminaries dominated by liberals. Many such young men and women have been completely ruined in the hands of such liberal theological professors. Several years ago, the writer, on the last day of a series of preaching engagements in a big city, personally heard the testimony of a theological student at a testimony session. He said that before admission to the seminary, he firmly believed in all the fundamental doctrines of the Bible. He was at that time on fire for the Lord. Later, he entered the seminary, and within two years, he doubted and put a question mark on almost every fundamental doctrine he had believed before! At the same time, his fervent spirit became completely cold. He praised the Lord and thanked Him for having now led him out of darkness into light. This is only one of many similar instances. How sad and how deplorable!

God wants us to make a definite decision. Are we willing to stand on His side? If so, we should completely separate ourselves from liberal churches and associations and their leaders who resist the truth. If we cannot do so, then let us not tell others that we are Bible-believing and that our churches are doctrinally sound. God does not want to use those who sit on the wall with both hands holding people on both sides of the wall. God wants us to declare very clearly where we stand. What He said through His servant Elijah in the days of old to those vacillating Israelites, He is still saying to these double-minded believers and their leaders today. "How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him" (1 Kings 18:21). God hates those who worship Him and yet burn incense before the altar of Baal. God's servants cannot compromise with the prophets of Baal, let alone join hands with them.

Similarly, believers who faithfully serve God cannot compromise with liberals, let alone join hands with them. When these leaders who profess to be doctrinally sound and Bible-believing co-operates with the liberals, many believers are greatly deceived by the liberals and suffer great harm. Heavy indeed is the responsibility of these church leaders who worship the Lord and Baal at the same time because of the sins thus committed.

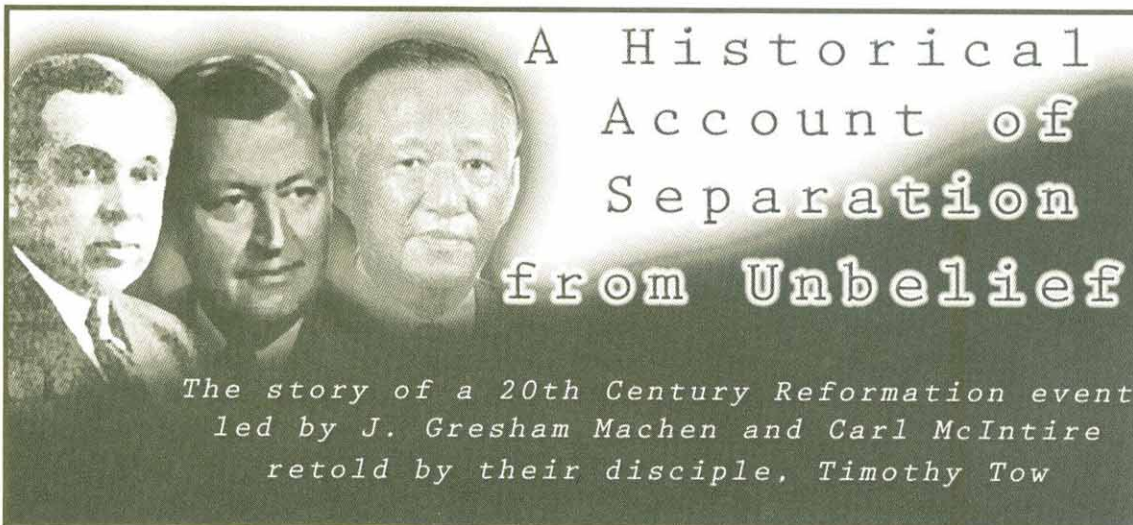
Some will certainly argue: "If we do exactly and so thoroughly as you have said, don't we

offend many people and meet with much difficulty?" You are perfectly right. If we really want to have a clean break from the liberals, we are certain to face ridicule, contempt, attack and persecution from many people. For this we shall be ridiculed for being superstitious, depraved, retrogressive, narrow-minded, and not magnanimous enough. We may even be accused of being malicious and deliberately creating trouble. But what does it matter? As long as God is pleased with us, it is enough. What is the use of our being welcomed by the whole world if God is displeased with us? Ought the servants of God be unfaithful to Him and disobey His commandments because of the fear of offending men? If you fear offending men, you may offend God. If you fear offending God, then do not fear offending men. In this respect, the Apostle Paul has given us an excellent example. Hear what he said: "Do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ" (Galatians 1:10).

There is in the Bible a very serious teaching, telling us how we should keep away from those who forsake the truth and preach false doctrines. 2 John 9-11 tells us: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."

You see, to bid these seducing, false teachers God speed is to become a partaker of their evil deeds. Is it not worse to unite with them? Having read this passage of the Scripture and learnt its teaching, we know that it is indeed great wickedness for God's people to unite with liberals who preach false doctrines, or to join their assemblies, or to invite them to preach, or to send students to be taught by them.

The forces of sin are increasing with the passage of time, so is Satan intensifying his activities. The call of God to His Church is becoming clearer and clearer. O men of God, rise up quickly and obey His command: "Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints," and "fight the good fight of faith."



By 1932 the Foreign Missions Board of the Presbyterian Church, USA, had practically fallen into the hands of the Auburn Affirmationists, the modernists and liberals. One thousand students preparing for foreign missionary service were required to read books by modernist authors, such as Harry Emerson Fosdick. Hitherto only Bible-believing missionaries were sent to the fields. Now, a rising number of modernists are also sent, tares sown among the wheat. As the modernists took over the helm of Foreign Missions, no voice of dissent was heard, until J. Gresham Machen spoke. Then the struggle for the faith raged in the Church, in the seminaries, and logically also in the missions.

In 1933, Dr Machen introduced an overture to the Assembly to elect to positions on the Board of Foreign Missions only those who upheld the Word of God in its infallibility and inerrancy, and the standards of the Church which include the five fundamentals declared

essential to Christianity in the Assembly of 1923. This overture was supported by a 110-page book, *Modernism and The Board of Foreign Missions*. In spite of the documentation of modernistic unbelief entering the foreign fields through an increasing number of liberal missionaries, one of whom was Pearl S. Buck, Dr. Machen was put down by the Church, now in the hands of the enemy. (Mrs Buck, an agnostic, was reported as saying that "she believes in Christ whether He actually lived or not." Nor did she believe in the damnation of the heathens who die without personal confession of faith in Christ. Yet she was benignly tolerated in the highest echelons of ecclesiastical power). This led to Machen's break with the Foreign Missions Board to start an Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions. "In view of the action of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the USA resisting the movement for reform of the Board of Foreign

Missions, a new Board will be organised by Bible-believing Christians to promote truly Biblical and truly Presbyterian work." These words of righteous defiance announced at the close of the General Assembly heralded the formation of the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions.

The new Board was constituted to provide an agency to which missionary-minded Christians holding to the Reformed Faith could contribute their substance and be assured that this would go to the support of the preaching of the pure Gospel. It was the first determined effort in Presbyterian circles to resist the avalanche of modern unbelief descending upon Presbyterian missions. Independent of control by the Presbyterian Church, this wise action was a genius from the Lord. On June 27, 1933, the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions was born. Its headquarters were established in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the City of Brotherly Love.

Dr. Carl McIntire served as its vice-president.

Immediately, the constitutionality of the new Board was challenged by the General Council of the Presbyterian Church in the USA. It declared it was impossible for any independent agency or board to carry on missionary operations within the Presbyterian Church.

The Independent Board was charged with diverting funds from the official Board of the General Assembly. As a matter of fact, it received funds, which never would have reached the official Board. The Independent Board made no appeal for funds, but relied entirely in faith upon the support of Christians sympathetic to its cause.

Action by mandate was taken to dissolve the Independent Board by the highest authorities of the Church, but Dr. Machen and his associates rebutted that the mandate of the General Assembly was neither in accordance with the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the USA nor with the Word of God. "To obey the so called 'mandate' of the 1934 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the USA would be equivalent to obeying men rather than God (Acts 4:19). It would be obeying human councils acting contrary to the Bible." This reply by members of the Independent Board was based on Section 7 of Chapter I of the "Form of Government" which states: "That all Church power, whether exercised by the body in general or in the way of representation by delegated authority, is only

ministerial and *The Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions* declarative, this is to say, that the Holy Scriptures are the only rule of faith and manners, that no Church judicatory ought to make laws to bind the conscience in virtue of their own authority, and that all their decisions should be founded upon the revealed will of God."

The men on the Independent Board refused to disband. Ecclesiastical persecution followed. They were brought to trial. Without going into the details, suffice it to mention the case against Machen and upon his disciple and student Carl McIntire.

A Judicial Commission of seven men tried Machen and found him guilty of disobedience to the order of the General Assembly. It was an "amazing trial" in an atmosphere of complete tyranny. He appealed to the Synod, but as expected, it was dismissed. The year was 1935.

The Mantle of Machen Falls on McIntire

By this time, Carl McIntire, who left Princeton to finish his study in Westminster under Machen, had graduated. He became pastor of Collingswood Presbyterian Church in 1933. In 1934, when McIntire was only 27 years of age, he was invited to sit on the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions. For refusing to resign from that Board, charges of "not being zealous and faithful in maintaining the peace of the Church and violation of ordination vows" were brought against him. He was suspended from the ministry and the Communion

of the Church, or in more vivid language, "defrocked." Though he appealed, his appeal was dismissed, and though the "high priests" of Presbyterian ecclesiastical powers had "defrocked" McIntire, the mantle of Machen would soon be seen to fall upon him! He was Machen's Elisha.

With the unfair judicial action taken against Machen and McIntire, separation from the old Church was inevitable. June 1936 saw the formation, under Machen, of the Presbyterian Church of America. As this name rivalled that of the parent body, Presbyterian Church in USA, legal action was taken which compelled it to be changed to Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

Now, the leadership in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and Westminster Seminary being amillennial and holding the position of Christian liberty in matters of smoking and drinking, it found opposition from those who were premillennial and held to the separated life. The two issues resulted in a group withdrawing from the infant Orthodox Presbyterian Church to form the Bible Presbyterian Church, and from Westminster to establish Faith Seminary, taking with them the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions. When Dr. J. Gresham Machen was called home on January 1, 1937, the struggle for the Faith fell upon Carl McIntire, leader of the newly formed Bible-Presbyterians and President of Faith Theological Seminary. To the Bible-Presbyterians of Singapore, McIntire is our American Root.

Are Biblical Separation and Ecumenism Complementary?



Quek Suan Yew

In some circles, ecumenism has become a byword for unity of all religions including Protestant and Roman Catholic Churches. This is the brainchild of nearly a century of global correspondence and co-operation among denominations and religions. Thousands of letters have been written and innumerable hours of dialogue and co-operation at both grassroots and leadership levels were held in order to bring about the advance ecumenical mindset to Christian circles as it is so prevalent today. It seems like everyone wants peace and unity at any cost. No price is too high to pay if the world can experience some form of man-made peace.

What better way to start than in Christianity! Christianity is one of the few religions where exclusivity is preached. We preach it because it is taught in the Bible. John 14:6 records, "Jesus saith unto

him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." And 1 Timothy 2:5-6 declares, "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." These are just two of very many verses of God's Holy Word where the exclusive claims of Jesus Christ and God are clearly taught.

The Bible teaches every Christian that we must separate ourselves from all forms of unbelief and sin. Bible passages such as 2 Corinthians 6:14-18 teach this truth very clearly, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for

ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

With the above Scripture portion in mind, how should Christians view ecumenism and the doctrine of biblical separation? Are they opposing doctrines like the opposite poles of a magnet that will always repel each other?

Biblical Ecumenism

Ecumenism comes from the Greek word, "*oikoumene*." The word means "the inhabited world" or "human kind" [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* edited by Walter Bauer,

William Arndt and Wilbur Gingrich, 2nd edition (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), 561]. This word is not "bad" in itself. It is the context in which the word is used that makes it acceptable or unacceptable.

This word is used in the Bible (cf. Luke 4:5 (world); 21:26 (earth); Romans 10:18 (world); Hebrews 1:6; Revelation 12:9 (world); etc.). Today, it has a "bad" connotation in the realm of conservative Christianity because the word has come to mean an "ecumenical compromise" where the truth of God has been ignored and trampled upon. Hence, whenever this word is used, it immediately conjures up many negative meanings and ideas.

Setting aside our bias mindset, we need to ask ourselves, "Is there no place for biblical ecumenism?" Some of the early councils where many of our present major doctrines were debated and ironed out such as the council of Nicea (A.D. 325) and Carthage (A.D. 397) were "ecumenical" in that they were attended by almost all of Christendom at that time. If we have a gathering of like-minded Christians who believe in the major tenets of biblical Christianity, even though we come from different denominations, this may be considered an ecumenical gathering. Such a gathering then would not be unbiblical. This would be considered a biblical ecumenical gathering!

The key is in the similarity of the major doctrines where Ephesians 4:4-6 is truthfully adhered to and practised, "There is one body, and one

Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." For example, if conservative Baptists, Presbyterians, Bible Presbyterians and Brethren churches and other fundamental churches come together for a meeting, this would be very acceptable to God. This kind of unity is based upon God's truth.

Ecumenism Today

The ecumenical unity present in the vast majority of Christendom today is not based upon the truth of God's Holy Word. Many of these religions do not believe that Jesus Christ is the only way to God. Jesus Christ is the only Saviour for all of mankind, besides Him there is no one else. If He is rejected or made into one of the many saviours of the world, then to participate in this kind of ecumenical unity is like living a lie. If I know that part of your house is on fire while you are asleep in it, and I decide not to shout and warn you about it, for the sake of "tranquillity," do you think that I am acting in wisdom and in the true spirit of friendship? Of course not. Likewise, when you truly believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God whom God sent to die for your sins that you may have your fellowship with God restored, and besides Him there is no one else, how could you sit down and quietly accept that there is another way to have your sins forgiven through another person? This is not true love for love delights in

truth. This is not the act of a friend, for a true friend would always uphold the truth even when the truth hurts. Proverbs 27:5-6, "Open rebuke is better than secret love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful."

How could God's children, having understood 2 Corinthians 6:14-18, participate in any meetings held by this world-wide ecumenism? Would it not displease God? The ecumenical movement of today is not unknown to God for He has prophesied nearly two thousand years ago that this would come about (cf. Revelation 13 and 17). It is commonly known as the one world church of the antichrist in conservative Christendom. This is one of the many signs that will occur to indicate the nearness of the Lord Jesus Christ's return in power and glory to judge the world. Prior to the coming of this one world church, there will first be a falling away (an apostasy) before this is fulfilled. 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4 declares, "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is

worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." In order for one to become an apostate, it is assumed that one has to be considered a Christian.

Therefore, Christendom is referred to here and not any other religion. What we see today within Christendom is the apostasy prophesied by God that will come to pass before the identity of the leader of this one world church is revealed!

Momentous times are before every believer. The quest of every child of God is not to prevent the ecumenical movement from taking place. We know it will become a reality because the Bible tells us so. What we need to guard ourselves against is participation in this movement.

Biblical Separation, the Antidote and Cure

The cure and antidote for the ecumenical movement is the practice of the doctrine of biblical separation. This is the frontline defence prescribed by God for the health and well-being of every believer and every church of God. Biblical separation is not an option but a command. Not to practise biblical separation will open the church to the

onslaught of the ecumenical movement. Many churches have been neutralised in their testimony for Christ by this compromise. The most frightening thing of all is that the members in these churches are unaware that they are supporting the one world church of the antichrist by their involvement in the ecumenical movement.

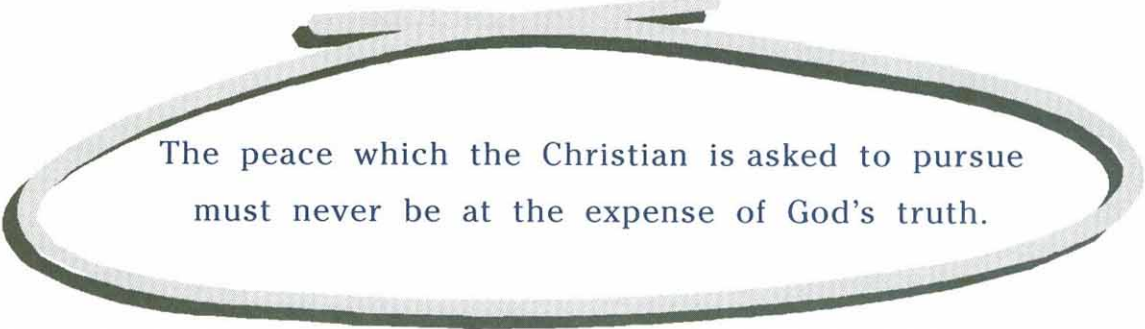
How serious is God on this matter of biblical separation from the ecumenical movement? The Word of God from 2 Thessalonians 2:11-12 says it all, "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." The context of these two verses is the revelation of the identity of the antichrist. This delusion makes people very sincere in their belief but sadly, they will be sincerely wrong.

Conclusion

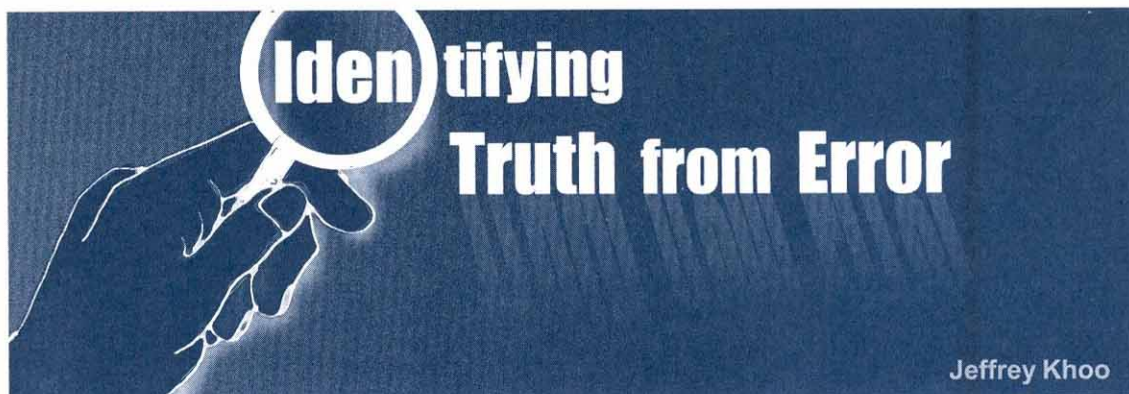
Christians are peacemakers. By the faithful preaching of God's Word, we are to be instruments of the Holy Spirit helping men to make peace with God through Jesus Christ's sacrificial work of redemption on Calvary. Christians are also called to make peace with all men.

Hebrews 12:14, "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." This Bible text reveals to us that this peace is characterised by holiness. Holiness is separation from sin and all errors. Therefore, the peace which the Christian is asked to pursue must never be at the expense of God's truth.

Ecumenism is not wrong if it is biblical. When genuine and obedient Christians of different denominations meet together for fellowship and mutual encouragement and service, this is very acceptable to God. Such ecumenical gatherings are encouraged and will benefit the believers who attend and will glorify God as the world will see how Christians can live together in unity, peace and harmony. But the ecumenical movement that comes from the world is not of God for God's Truth is compromised and rejected. Hence, in obedience to God and His Holy Word, every faithful born again Christian cannot be part of the ecumenical movement that has come upon Christendom today. May God help us to be holy even as He is holy. Amen.



The peace which the Christian is asked to pursue
must never be at the expense of God's truth.



Hebrews 5:11-14: "Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."

SARS is dangerous and deadly. It has changed the way we live. But there is a greater danger we often forget—a danger that will affect us in a deeper way if we are not immunised against it. It is the danger of false prophets, false teachers, false pastors, false Christians, false Bibles, false doctrines. When Jesus was asked about the signs of His coming in Matthew 24, He told the disciples to watch out for false prophets and false Christs. In 1 Timothy 4:1, Paul likewise warned, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils."

Today, we are invaded by all kinds of doctrinal bacteria and viruses. They are out to hurt and cripple us spiritually. Are our spiritual senses in tune with the truth, and sensitive to the spiritual dangers that surround us today?

We need to be vaccinated. We need to be immunised. How? We need to work hard at

studying God's Word. We need to know our fundamental doctrines inside out. We need to be mature in our spiritual understanding in order to discern truth from error, good from bad.

In Hebrews 5, we find the author chiding the Jewish believers for being so shallow in their faith and knowledge of God's Word. He wanted to teach them many deep things about Christ, but found that they could not handle the solid truths of God's Word. They were still babies. They still needed milk. They were unskilful in the word of righteousness (verse 13). They lacked the necessary foundation to learn the really hard and important doctrines. This was not because they had just been converted. They were not one or two-year-old Christians. By this time, they would already have been Christians for at least 30 years. They should have been teachers, but were still students (verse 12). They ought to have been in university by now, but we find them still in kindergarten.

Why? The reason is given in verse 11; they were "dull of hearing." The word in the original literally means "lazy." They were slothful in studying God's Word. We are often like that, aren't we? When the pastor is preaching, we are sleeping. When the Sunday school teacher is teaching, we are daydreaming. We spend more time reading the newspapers every day than in reading God's Word. Instead of attending the Bible classes, we are at home watching TV. That is why many of us are weak. We are malnourished, spiritually unhealthy. If we can

see our spiritual physique, we would be skin and bones only. We are walking skeletons. When we are so spiritually skinny, we get blown about by any and every wind of doctrine. There are many false winds that blow from every direction. Some are breezes, some are monsoons, some are hurricanes and tornadoes. How can we not be blown away by these heretical storms? We need to pile our foundations really deep into the Rock of God's Word. There is no other way!

There is no short cut to this. We need to start working on our spiritual maturity (verse 14). It takes time for a child to grow into adulthood. It takes time for our spiritual muscles to develop through constant exercise so that we can discern good from evil. The more time we spend knowing God and understanding His Word, the more we will be transformed in our thoughts, feelings, and actions. The more we know His Word, the more we build up the arsenal we need to combat the attacks of the devil. How did Jesus fight Satan in the wilderness? Was it not by the very Word of God as found in the Holy Scriptures? "It is written," "It is written," "It is written." (1) "Man shall not live by bread alone ..." (Matthew 4:4), (2) "Thou shalt not

tempt the Lord thy God" (Matthew 4:7), (3) "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve" (Matthew 4:10). We need to start memorising Scripture. We need to saturate ourselves with the Scriptures till our blood becomes Bibline (so said Spurgeon).

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). There is a need to interpret God's Word correctly and accurately. This involves knowing and studying doctrine.

Paul warned in 1 Timothy 4:1, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." What is the biblical antidote against heresy? The answer is in the last verse of that chapter, "Take heed unto thyself, and unto *the doctrine*; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee" (1 Timothy 4:16). The antidote is "*the doctrine*" (i.e., the fundamental truths of the Christian faith). Know your theology, know your doctrines. Be like the noble Bereans; search the Scriptures, and make sure you know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free.

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"For God loveth a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. 9:7).

New Evangelicalism

the fine art of fence straddling

Vincent Chia

As the battle between truth and error rages, New Evangelicalism tries to sit on the fence. It seeks to avoid the fury of war, and counsel the church to rethink its historic faith. The irenic spirit of New Evangelicalism follows a downward path towards greater compromise and blindness. Christians must beware of this spiritual deception.

New Evangelicalism is not a distinctively defined scheme of dogma or theology. It is neither a denomination nor an organization that can be pinpointed categorically. It is more accurately described as a philosophy of compromise and appeasement. It is a mood of neutralism, a hodgepodge of theological confusion, ecumenical pacification and self-proclaimed "orthodoxy." It is pervasive, deceptive, dangerous and definitely lethal to the spiritual integrity of the church. Pervasive, because its philosophy is acceptable and appealing to the carnal, rational human mind; deceptive, because it claims to be faithful to the apostolic faith; and

dangerous, because contamination with its false beliefs would result in the demise of the "faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3).

Dr. Harold J. Ockenga, the father of New Evangelicalism, succinctly described its philosophy in the following words:

"Neo-evangelicalism was born in 1948 in connection with a convocation address which I gave in the Civic Auditorium in Pasadena. While reaffirming the theological view of fundamentalism, this address repudiated its ecclesiology and its social theory. The ringing call for a repudiation of separatism and the summons to social involvement received a hearty response from many Evangelicals. ... It differed from fundamentalism in its repudiation of separatism and its determination to engage itself in the theological dialogue of the day. It had a new emphasis upon the application of the gospel to the sociological, political, and economic areas of life."

(Harold J. Ockenga, in the Foreword to Dr. Harold Lindsell's book *The Battle for the Bible*)

The Repudiation of Biblical Separation

One of the basic tenets of New Evangelicalism is the repudiation of ecclesiastical separatism. Rejecting God's command to separate from apostates, false teachers and those who cooperate with them (2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15; Romans 12:1-2; 16:17; Ephesians 5:11; 1 Thessalonians 5:22; 1 Timothy 6:3-5; 2 Timothy 2:16-21; Titus 3:10; 2 John 7-11; Jude 3; Revelation 18:4), the New Evangelicals prefer to "dialogue" with unbelievers. The Bible teaches us to "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Ephesians 5:11). Biblical separation is also taught clearly in the second epistle of John, culminating in verses 10 and 11: "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."

Dr. Harold Ockenga made the following remark, "The New Evangelicalism has changed its strategy from one of

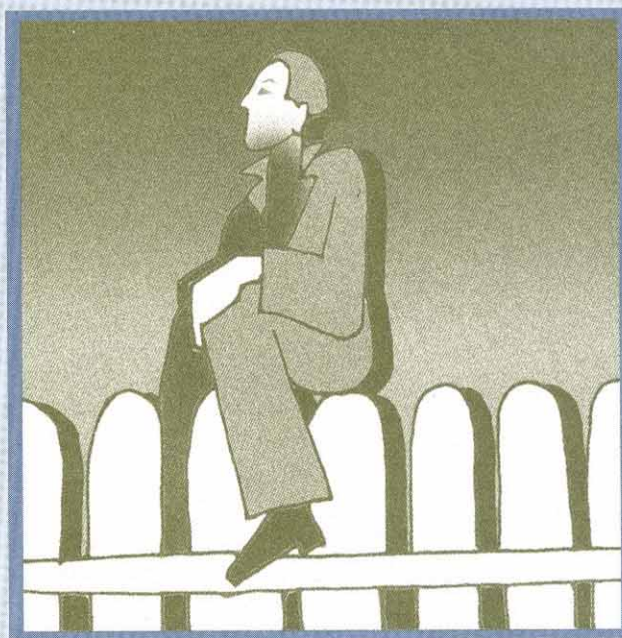
separation to one of infiltration. Instead of static front battles, the new theological war is one of movement. Instead of attack upon error, the New Evangelicals proclaim the great historic doctrines of Christianity ... The strategy of the New Evangelicalism is the positive proclamation of truth in distinction from all errors without delving in personalities which embrace error."

How can we proclaim the truth "without delving in personalities which embrace error"? Heretics have always been identified throughout church history. The Apostles themselves were quick to name names;

Hymenaeus (1 Timothy 1:20; 2 Timothy 2:17), Philetus (2 Timothy 2:17-18), Alexander (1 Timothy 1:20; 2 Timothy 4:14), Demas (2 Timothy 4:10), Diotrophes (3 John 9), Phygellus and Hermogenes (2 Timothy 1:15) were properly identified and dealt with in the epistles. Paul did not "dialogue" with perpetrators of false doctrines; neither did he infiltrate the churches to promote a theological "movement." With regard to false teachers, the apostle commanded us to "mark them" and "avoid them" (Romans 16:17).

"Instead of attack upon error," the New Evangelicals encourage disobedience to

the Word of God. In its "ringing call" for the repudiation of separatism, New Evangelicalism has replaced clear biblical teachings with worldly, carnal philosophy. Its strategy of "infiltration" into apostate denominations is in direct opposition to God's



command to "come out from among them, and be ye separate" (2 Corinthians 6:17).

In the guise of "love" and "charity," they would cooperate with the enemies of God in ecumenical ventures. Returning to the vomit of Romanism and wallowing in the Modernist's mire, these fraternal compromisers would trade biblical truths for "unity" and "scholarship."

The Desire for Worldly Recognition

New Evangelicalism is a movement nurtured on intellectual pride. Determined "to engage itself in the

theological dialogue of the day," New Evangelicalism urges Christianity to rethink its historic position. It exhorts us to be less rigid, more tolerant and understanding. New Evangelicals view Fundamentalism as rather "unloving," "narrow,"

"unscholarly" and "doctrinaire."

Credentials and respectability have taken precedence. Scholarly recognition is now an essential commodity. In an earnest desire to be recognized by the academic world, the New Evangelicals have gradually accommodated rationalistic, modernistic and humanistic thoughts. Renouncing the militant exposure of doctrinal errors, they

prefer to negotiate for a "middle-ground." New Evangelicals refuse to reprove false teachings and teachers.

"Neo-evangelicals emphasized the restatement of Christian theology in accordance with the need of the time, the reengagement in the theological debate, the recapture of denominational leadership, and the re-examination of theological problems such as the antiquity of man, the universality of the flood, God's method of creation, and others." (Harold J. Ockenga, in the Foreword to Dr. Harold Lindsell's book *The Battle for the Bible*).

Since when did fundamental doctrines such as the universality of the flood, creation *ex nihilo* and the inerrancy of the Bible become “theological problems”? Yet in its desire to compromise with “modern scholarship,” New Evangelicalism had concocted a myriad of heresies, for example, theistic evolution and limited inerrancy.

The dogmatic proclamation of biblical doctrines is replaced by a theological compromise, which attempts to tailor God’s truth to the current generation. “In accordance with the need of the time,” New Evangelicals are willing to dilute vital doctrines to make them more palatable to carnal minds. After more than fifty years of “reengagement in the theological debate,” none of the “denominational leadership” has been recaptured. Contrariwise, the irenic spirit has captured the hearts of most denominations. Be aware that “The New Evangelicalism is a theological and moral compromise of the deadliest sort. It is an insidious attack upon the Word of God” (Dr. Charles Woodbridge).

Preaching a Social Gospel

The devil knows that blatant error is easy to identify. Therefore, Satan’s perennial strategy is to seek an amalgam of truth and error. The thrice-holy God demands separation from

error and unbelief; the father of lies urges us to cooperate and compromise. Our Lord demands that we preach no other gospel (Galatians 1:8-9); Satan entices us to add social work to the Gospel of Christ.

New Evangelicalism attempts to combine the scriptural gospel with the social gospel of liberalism. This false social gospel is radically different from what our Lord had commanded us to preach. “First, it tended to emphasize structural reforms – changes in law, government policy, and the formal institutions of society. Second, it was firmly rooted in Protestant liberal theology.” (*Eerdman’s Handbook to Christianity in America*, p. 319)

Christian charity (James 1:27) must be distinguished from the gospel preached by the apostles (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). Nowhere in the New Testament do we see the usage of social-political work for the propagation of the gospel. The apostles did not labour for great social-political projects with the heathens. They simply went forth in preaching the gospel, producing disciples who would in turn convert others to Christianity. New Evangelicalism exalts social-political agendas to a place of prominence, sometimes even substituting gospel evangelism itself. This is to ignore the example given by the apostles.

Derived from liberal theology and modernism, the emphasis of the social gospel

is on social service and reformation. The apostles were concerned with the salvation of souls, not the eradication of societal ills. New Evangelicalism marries the pure saving gospel with liberal ideologies to produce a false, humanistic message. Things of the spirit and of the flesh are mangled together to produce an unholy alliance; a misbegotten, illegitimate counterfeit. Dr. Ockenga’s “summons to social involvement” is a New Evangelical lie which we must reject. God has called us to preach the gospel of Christ (Romans 1:16), not a spurious humanistic message that does not save.

Conclusion

Dear Christian soldiers, beware of New Evangelicalism. It is a satanic lie that seduces us to forsake militancy for the truth and to eventually capitulate to evil. It approaches us with a facade of love and reasonableness, but denies the very Truth that it claims to profess.

Dr. Charles Woodbridge, who was a professor at Fuller Seminary and a member of the National Association of Evangelicals before he rejected New Evangelicalism, warned, “The New Evangelical advocates toleration of error. It is following the downward path of accommodation to error, cooperation with error, contamination by error, and ultimate capitulation to error.”

Biblical Separation in the Choice of a Life Partner



Reggor Galarpe



Can a Christian marry an unbeliever? This is one question that is often asked in spite of it being a fundamental truth from the Bible that Christians should not marry non-Christians. 2 Corinthians 6:14 clearly says; “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?” Though the Apostle Paul in this verse instructs the Corinthian Christians to separate and have no improper connection with the unbelievers in general, it may as well refer to any intimate relationship like that of a boy-girl relationship and marriage in particular.

Marriage, as we all know, is a divine institution ordained by God in the Garden of Eden. As such, it has to be highly regarded with reverence and awe for the One who instituted and ordained it. Christians should avoid the thought of marrying a non-Christian. It should neither be considered as a last resort by those who are desperate in getting married. Doing so is tantamount to going against the will of God in one's life. Sadly, the number of Christians marrying non-Christians is ever on the increase. It is a sad thing, because it will hinder our spiritual walk as a Christian, and limit our usefulness and service to the Lord, and it will keep us from enjoying the fulness of life that God has planned for each one of us. Indeed, it is unprofitable and unwise to be yoked together with an unbeliever in marriage.

2 Corinthians 6:14-18 is the classic passage on primary separation, that is, the believer's separation from the world, from sin, and from unholy partnership with unbelievers. In it we find the Apostle Paul's rhetorical questions, each of which demands a negative answer. Looking closely at these questions, one will find that it can be well applied in the choice of a life partner. Let us consider these questions.

1. “What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?” (verse 14b). Can a good partnership exist between a person who loves righteous living according to the absolute truths of the Bible and a spouse who holds on to the philosophy of the world, which is contrary to the Bible? Imagine the constant conflict and argument as to who is right and who is wrong in such a kind of relationship, as they differ in the manner and choices of life.

2. “What communion hath light with darkness?” (verse 14c). The scripture tells us that Christians are in the light while the unbelievers are in darkness. How can a Christian continue to walk in the light when his spouse constantly drifts away into darkness?

3. “What concord hath Christ with Belial?” (verse 15a). Belial is another name for Satan. Is any fellowship possible between Christ and Belial? It is absurd to think of such a fellowship! Yet we see more and more Christians marrying non-Christians. Can

servants of Christ have harmony with servants of Satan?

4. “What part hath he that believeth with an infidel?” (verse 15b). What is there in common between a believer and a non-believer? Their standards and principles are different, and so is their loyalty (the believer is loyal to his Lord while the non-believer is loyal to the world). There is nothing in common except there be compromise.

5. “What agreement hath the temple of God with idols?” (verse 16a). The body of a Christian is a temple of the living God and by becoming unequally yoked with a non-Christian, he is actually attempting the impossible – linking true worship of God with the worship of idols. It is an abomination unto the Lord!

Consider seriously the agonising outcomes of an unequally yoked marriage! In choosing a life partner, one should be discerning not to allow emotions and affections overcome one's convictions and belief. Hence, your “Mr. Right” could not be the right man if he's not a believer. Likewise, your “Fair Lady” could not be the fair one if she is not a Christian.

Even while it is clearly stated in the Scriptures, still many insist that their unequal relationship is a special case. That their partner is willing to follow him or her to church after marriage, and that they will commit themselves for Catechism, and would even serve the Lord later. Don't be deceived! The Bible itself records many of these unholy unions. And see for yourself how it brings ruin to the believer! To cite a few:

1. Samson and Delilah formed an unholy yoke. Samson was a Nazarite and was supposed to separate himself unto the Lord (Numbers 6; Judges 13:5-7) but he fell in love with Delilah, a Philistine woman. His union with Delilah eventually caused his destruction.

2. Solomon married heathen women that turned away his heart. “For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the

Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites” (1 Kings 11:4, 5).

3. Ahab and Jezebel corrupted Israel by their unequally yoked marriage. Ahab was an Israelite while Jezebel was the daughter of the king of the Zidonians. Jezebel was a wicked, unbelieving woman. As a result of this unholy marriage, Jezebel influenced Israel to fall into wickedness and Baal worship (1 Kings 16:29-33).

4. Later on, after Jehoshaphat had made an alliance with Ahab and his son Ahaziah, Jehoshaphat's son and successor, Jehoram, married Athaliah, the murderous daughter of Ahab and Jezebel (2 Kings 8:16-18; 2 Chronicles 21:5, 6). This made both the northern and the southern kingdoms of Israel fall into wickedness and idolatry.

5. During the Babylonian captivity, the people of Israel also had unequally yoked marriages with the daughters of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites that caused Ezra to rent his garment and mantle, and pluck off the hair of his head and his beard (Ezra 9:1-3).

6. Nehemiah also rebuked the Jewish remnant because they married unsaved women. He used Solomon as an example of such unholy action (Nehemiah 13:23-27).

These are just some of the instances wherein we see the consequences of unequally yoked marriages. So don't ever think that yours is going to be a special and extraordinary case! Even Solomon the wisest king realised how foolish he was when he went after the vanities of life (that includes his marriages with unsaved women).

Just as we are expected to apply Biblical Separation in matters of doctrines, worldliness and sin, we must also apply it in the choice of a life partner. Marriage is a blessing from God and let it be so to you, by choosing a believing life partner. There is no better source of counsel about this matter than His Word and His people. Let us not forget that when we marry unbelievers, we are actually rebelling against the Word of God and sinning against God.

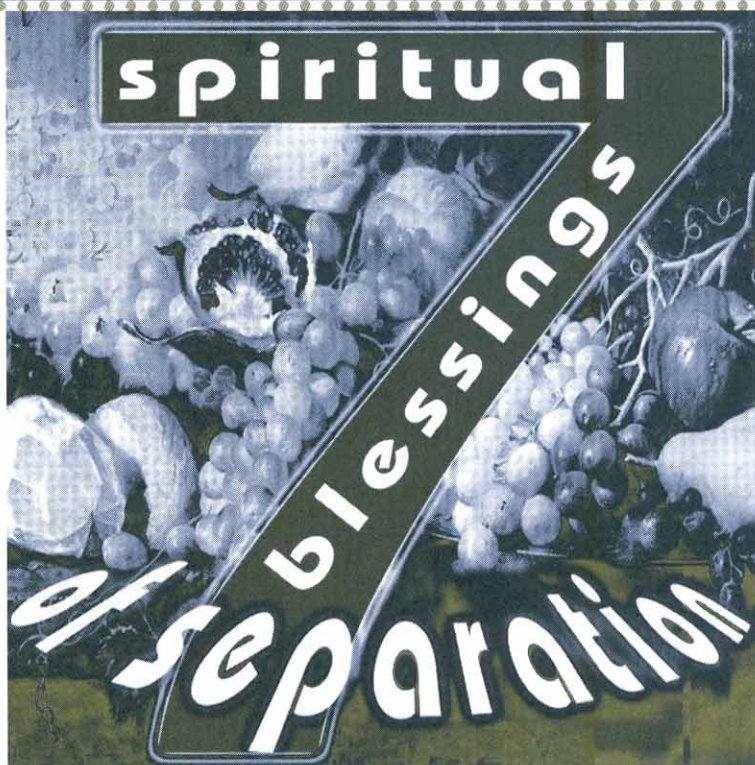
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very biblical doctrine is a blessing to those who believe and

apply it fully in their lives and ministries. Our Lord Jesus said, "Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it" (Luke 11:28). God's truth profits everyone who believes and obeys. Isaiah the prophet said, "Thus saith the LORD, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I am the LORD thy God which teacheth thee to profit. . . . O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea"

(Isaiah 48:17-18). God's truth, regardless of differing opinions, if adhered to passionately, will provide great blessings to the soul. They who believe and obey the truth of God's Word can be expectant of glorious eternal blessings – "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory" (Psalm 73:24).

Every doctrine of the Scripture is to be received and practised. So, the doctrine of separation, being a clear teaching of God's Word, must be upheld. Nonetheless, many reject it as an unpleasant, burdensome, useless doctrine. Some refer to it as a "minor doctrine" or "non-essential doctrine."



Prabhudas Koshy

However, this doctrine is the very channel of divine blessings. Furthermore, it also acts as a shield against errors. To practise the doctrine of separation is to secure the pure and glorious divine blessings for our souls and for our churches.

The Bible records very vividly the blessings that God promised to those who separate themselves from sin, worldliness, false doctrines, false teachers and disobedient Christians.

Separation keeps our souls and congregations from the filthiness of sin.

When we practise biblical separation against the sinful pleasures of the world, we will be able to purify and protect

ourselves from all the sins of the world. In Ezra 6:21, we have a great example of this – "And the children of Israel, which were come again out of captivity, and all such as had separated themselves unto them from the filthiness of the heathen of the land, to seek the LORD God of Israel." The same truth is found in Revelation 18:4, where a call to separate is given – "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins."

Separation will help us to be like Christ.

In Hebrews 7:26, we are told that Jesus Christ is "such an high priest

became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." All Christians are to be like Christ; and to be like Christ, they should separate themselves from sin and sinners, just as Jesus did. Of course, this does not mean we should avoid befriending sinners to share the Gospel. Rather, the practice of biblical separation is calling us not to partake in their sinful activities. To be like Christ in this world, separation is necessary.

Separation from ungodly people and their activities will help us to delight in God's Word.

This is the message that we read in Psalm 1:1-3, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." Ungodly friends can often be a distraction and hindrance to a Christian's obedient life. So separation from close affiliation with ungodly people will rid us of

distractions from God's Word.

Separation helps us to be worthy servants of God.

To be a faithful and good minister of God's Word, we must refuse tolerating erroneous doctrines and philosophies. The Apostle Paul's words to Timothy prove this truth – "If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained. But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness" (1 Timothy 4:6-7).

Separation helps us to be delivered from God's wrath against unrepentant sinners.

Revelation 18:4 affirms that separation will deliver us from sin and also its aftermath – "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."

Separation assures us that God will receive us.

"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive

you" (2 Corinthians 6:17). Though the world and compromising Christians may reject us, the Lord will receive us. Romans 15:7 teaches us that whomsoever Christ receives, He receives them to the glory of God. What a blessing it is for those who are separated from sin and false doctrines to know that they are vessels of God's glory!

Separation guarantees the presence and fellowship of God.

To those who will not be unequally yoked with unbelief and sin, the Lord promises that "I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (2 Corinthians 6:16).

Separation guarantees the abiding love and care of God.

To the separated Christians, the Word of God promises in 2 Corinthians 6:17b-18 that "I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." Those who will separate themselves for the glory of God are promised His unceasing fatherly love and care.

Utterances of John Knox

Knox (1505-1572) was a leader of the Scottish Reformation

1. Sin was so odious and detestable in the presence of our heavenly Father, that by no other sacrifice could the same be purged, except by the blood and death of the only innocent Son of God.

2. When I deeply do consider the cause of Christ's death to have been *sin*, and sin yet to dwell in all flesh, with Paul I am compelled to sob and groan as a man under a heavy burden.

3. Albeit I never lack the presence and plain image of my own wretched infirmity; yet seeing sin so manifestly abound in all estates, I am compelled to thunder out the threatenings of God against obstinate rebellers.

4. I sob and lament for that I cannot be quit and rid of sin. I desire to live a more perfect life.

5. Cause have you none of desperation, albeit the devil rage never so cruelly, and albeit the flesh be never so frail, daily and hourly lusting against God's holy commandments. This is not the time of justice before our own eyes. We look for that which is promised, the kingdom everlasting, prepared for us from the beginning.

6. All England is this day called; but ye know how mean is the number that obey the voice of the caller.

7. The member shall be correspondent and like to the Head, who in anguish of extreme dolour cried, 'My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?' Oh words most dolorous, and voice most lamentable to be heard proceeding from the mouth of the Son of God! He was no debtor to sin nor death; and yet this did he suffer, not only to make satisfaction to the justice of God, which we were never able to do, but also to put us in comfort that His suffering was not in vain, but even for our example.

8. He is our Saviour and only Mediator, the first-begotten of the dead, the sole and sovereign Prince, exalted above all powers and potentates whatsoever, that by Him we, now sore afflicted in absence of our Bridegroom, may receive immortality and glory when He shall return to restore the liberty to the sons of God.

9. Oh miserable, unthankful, and most mischievous world! what shall be thy condemnation when He that has so often gently provoked you to obey His truth, shall come in His glory to punish thy contempt!

10. Our heavenly Father, of His infinite wisdom, to hold us in continual remembrance that in this wretched world there is no rest, suffereth us to be tried with this cross, that with an unfeigned heart we may desire not only an end of our own troubles (for that shall come to us by death), but also of all the troubles of the Church of God; which shall not be before the again-coming of the Lord Jesus.

The Danger of Promoting a Pro-Homosexual Society

Peter Chua

The topic of homosexuality is very much in the forefront after recent reports ("Govt. more open to employing gays now"; The Straits Times, 4th July 2003). It seems that homosexual groups are using the media to declare homosexuality as a normal and healthy lifestyle and live as if traditional morals are obsolete.

There is a new thinking that technology and talent will not bring Singapore far. There is a need for tolerance. They say that if Singapore is serious about attracting clever/intelligent, talented people, whether gay or not, then she must become a more tolerant society. However, we refute this notion. Let us remind ourselves that it is the corrupting influence of immoral behaviour that will hinder economic growth. History speaks for itself. Proverbs 14:34 says, "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people." The moral foundation of a people is pivotal to the nation's economic and spiritual health and survival.

In London, March 1995, Derek Rawcliffe, the retired Anglican bishop of Glasgow and Galloway, told a BBC television programme that he was homosexual and called for a church blessing on gay couples.

In June this year, Canada's cabinet approved a new national policy to open marriage to gay couples, making Canada the third country after the Netherlands and Belgium to allow same-sex unions. In the same month, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down a discriminatory law against gay sex, which in effect ends all anti-sodomy laws throughout the country.

We are appalled that there were talks about holding a gay events in Singapore, modelled after the gay Mardi Gras parade of Sydney. If such events are staged here, there might be a repercussion that gay leaders will one day advocate gay marriages, and, to complete the cycle, they will eventually promote the adoption of orphaned children by married gay couples.

What is our stand? God considers homosexuality to be a wicked and terrible sin. It is forbidden by the Law. "Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination" (Leviticus 18:22). This sin called for the death penalty under the law. "If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death" (Leviticus 20:13). "There shall be no whore of the daughters of Israel, nor a

Biblical Response to Homosexuality



Prabhudas Koshy

Unstoppable Moral Declension: A Sign of Our Lord's Return

For more than two decades, there have been relentless efforts all over the world, in all realms of life, to get the homosexual behaviour accepted as an alternative lifestyle. People from all walks of life – psychologists, politicians, religious leaders, actors and actresses – were seen trying to get society to accept this unnatural behaviour as a norm.

Now in Singapore, we hear of homosexuals being hired by the government. Influential people, even some “Christian” leaders, have publicly referred to homosexuality as a natural, harmless orientation with which some people are born. Some have excused it as an “alternative lifestyle;” others have referred to it as “sexual orientation.” There are also claims that homosexual tendencies are caused by genetic deformity or disorder. All such explanations are attempts to legitimise this sexual perversion in our society.

There is nothing much we can do to stop our modern society from such moral and spiritual declension. The Bible clearly predicts that moral degeneration will be a clear sign of end times. Our Lord Jesus said clearly that before He comes again, there will be a time of depraved behaviour in the world such as in the time of Noah and Sodom, an ancient city known for her homosexual activities (Luke 17:26-30). The

Apostle Paul warned about moral declension not only in the world, but also within the church – “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away” (2 Timothy 3:1-5). Even many of those who appear in some kind of religiosity will be carnal and corrupt from the innermost part of their being. No wonder we hear of sexual abuses and perversions of so-called clergies!

The rhetoric of gay-rights activism portrays sexual sins as harmless and in wholly non-moral terms. But any one, who has looked at societies that have long accepted homosexuality, can also see that many social evils have followed its acceptance.

As homosexuality receives more acceptance in our society, there will be more propaganda and homosexual activities. These will ensnare the souls of our children and spouses. Temptations will be everywhere. The aftermath of legalized homosexual activities will be detrimental to the sanctity and peace of our homes. There will be increased marital break-ups and other sexual perversions. If homosexuality

is acceptable, why not bestiality? Why not incest? Why not adultery?

The Apostle Paul warned – “For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was” (2 Timothy 3:6-9).

Though we can do very little to prevent society from morally and spiritually degenerating, we must teach our church, our families and ourselves what the Scripture says about homosexuality. The truth of God’s Word is our only shield. If we believe and preach what the Bible says, we can protect our souls and can deliver some who are tempted or fallen. So Paul advises us, “But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Timothy 3:14-17).

Biblical Response to the Spread of Homosexuality

(i) View homosexuality as a detestable sin that is prohibited by God: Humanistic psychopathology has been trying for years to blame all kinds of sinful behaviour such as alcoholism, theft, drug addiction, sexual perversion, etc. on genetics. Today, the same voices are heard in support of the legitimisation of homosexuality.

However, the Scripture clearly speaks of homosexuality as a sin. We must have the

same mentality, if we are to keep ourselves away from its snares.

“Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination . . . Defile not ye yourselves in any of these things: for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you” (Leviticus 18:22, 24). “If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them” (Leviticus 20:13).

Pro-homosexual teachers have opposed the validity of the above Scripture verses by saying that Christians are no longer under the Mosaic law. But we must carefully distinguish the dietary or ceremonial laws (abolished in the New Testament – Hebrews 10:8-10) from the moral laws (reinforced in the New Testament and still applicable today — Mark 7:20-23; Matthew 5:27, 28). Some have argued, “Why do Christians quote the Old Testament on homosexuality, then ignore the commands that prohibit eating shellfish or wearing clothing of mixed fibres?” The important distinction between these laws is reflected in the Old Testament penalties for breaking them: Disobedience to the ceremonial laws resulted in uncleanness (Leviticus 11:24, etc.), while breaching the moral law meant death (Leviticus 20:13).

Moreover, the New Testament itself condemns homosexuality in an explicit manner. In Romans 1, the activities of gays as well as lesbians are depicted as deplorable and damned deeds of corrupt minds. This passage is usually considered the most thorough and clear condemnation of homosexuality in the Bible. “Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: . . . For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the

woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet" (Romans 1:24-27).

God's hatred for the sin of homosexuality is seen in His pronouncement of the death penalty on those who committed it. Therefore, to accept homosexuality as an acceptable lifestyle, is to entertain the very thing that God has clearly detested. This is rebellion. It is wickedness in high places, when Christian ministers support homosexuality, and churches go about ordaining homosexuals to be pastors and office-bearers.

Let us neither call what God detests, good, nor accept that which He condemns.

Do not regard homosexuality as a natural sexual orientation but as the sinful choice of a lustful mind. Homosexual activities are the expressions of unrestraint, runaway lust of a sexually perverted mind. When fleshly desires deteriorate, they inevitably lead to all forms of perverted sexual sins, such as masturbation, homosexuality, bestiality, incest, etc.

(ii) View homosexuality as a perversion of God's design and purpose of marriage:

God created a woman for the man and told them that "they shall be one flesh." This truth is taught repeatedly in the Scripture (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:5-6; Mark 10:8; Ephesians 5:31). According to God's design, sexual activities are only to be practised within the marriage between one man and one woman. The Scripture's advice to those who do not have the gift of single-hood is "to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband" (1 Corinthians 7:2). The Scripture permits no sexual pleasure outside marriage.

God did not ordain homosexual marriages; rather, He condemns them. As the saying goes, "God did not create Steve, but Eve,

for Adam." Homosexuality is a daring perversion of God's design of marriage and procreation.

Some have argued that Jesus' silence on this issue proves that He agreed to homosexuality. This claim is abominable. There are many types of sexual behaviour that He did not address (incest, rape, bestiality, etc). That doesn't mean they are permissible. Jesus always upheld the Old Testament law (Matthew 5:17-19), which strictly condemned homosexual acts. And He affirmed celibacy as the only legitimate alternative to heterosexual marriage, not homosexuality (Matthew 19:12).

(iii) Be warned that unrepentant homosexuals will not inherit the kingdom of God:

First Corinthians 6:9-10 mention homosexuals in a long list of people who will not inherit the kingdom of God. "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind (homosexuals), Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." This passage is clear about the coming judgment on the unrepentant homosexuals and all other sinners. The original Greek expression literally means "a male who lies with a male." There is no exception. Homosexual behaviour is forbidden, no matter what degree of "love" or lust is involved.

(iv) Deliverance from homosexuality is possible, if one comes to Jesus in repentance and faith:

Immediately after telling the Corinthian Christians about a long list of sinners, including homosexuals, who will not inherit the kingdom of heaven, Paul wrote, "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Corinthians 6:11).

The World's Hatred for Christians

Errol D. Stone

The Chambers English Dictionary describes hate as, "to dislike intensely; extreme dislike, hatred; an object of hatred." A hate-monger is described as "a person who stirs up hatred." According to God's Word, there are different types and degrees of hatred, which Christians will have to face in this world. The world's hatred for Christians is recorded both in the Bible and in history.

Christians have been mocked, hated and despised from the beginning. The Word of God says, "Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you" (1 John 3:13). Jesus Christ tells us the reason for the world's hatred toward us in Mark 13:13 – "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake." It is because of Jesus that the world hates us. Jesus also said, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you" (John 15:18). Now, why does the world hate Jesus Christ? We can find the answer in Jesus' own words found in John 7:7 – "The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil." The world hates Christ because He confronts its sinfulness. In 1 John 3:8, we read, "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." It is because Jesus has come to expose and eliminate the sins of the world that the world and its prince, the devil, hate Him.

Examples of World's Hatred

Cain hated his brother

"For this is the message that ye heard from the begining, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous" (1 John 3:11-12).

Cain was the oldest child of Adam and Eve. Abel was Cain's brother. Cain was a farmer by occupation, whilst his brother Abel was a shepherd. "And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell" (Genesis 4:3-5). Cain brought an offering of the produce from the ground to the Lord whilst Abel brought the best quality of his flock. The New Testament described Abel, as a man of faith, who "offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain" (Hebrews 11:4). Abel offered a correct sacrifice, with the right heart. Because of this, Cain was envious of Abel and developed a jealous hatred for his brother, and murdered him. According to 1 John 3:12, Cain murdered his brother, Abel, because his works were evil, and his brother's righteous.

Jesus Christ spoke of "the blood of righteous Abel" (Matthew 23:35; Luke 11:51) along with the blood of Zechariah, a righteous man who was slaughtered. Abel was righteous, but was hated by the wicked brother, Cain. As a result of his malicious hatred and murder, Cain was cursed by God. Jude warns us to beware of those who have gone in the way of Cain. He said, "Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain..." (Jude 11). Cain became a murderer, for his heart was not right with God (Genesis 4:1-12).

Saul hated Christians

The Apostle Paul was originally known by his Jewish name Saul. Before his conversion, he was an arch-enemy of Christians and gave consent for Stephen's persecutors to stone him to death. Paul developed a hatred for the Christian Church because it presented a threat to all that he believed. He described himself as "an Hebrew of the Hebrews" (Philippians 3:5). He studied in Jerusalem "at the feet of Gamaliel," the most illustrious and well-known Rabbi of his day (Acts 5:34). His studies grounded him in the traditions of Jewish orthodoxy and he assaulted Christians and the infant Church of Jerusalem. He persecuted Christians in order to safeguard his tradition.

Paul told the Galatians how he "persecuted the church of God, and wasted it [tried to destroy it]" (Galatians 1:13). Before his conversion unto salvation, at the height of his suppression upon the Church, Paul publicly associated himself with Stephen's executioners and sanctioned his stoning. Afterwards, he embarked on a campaign of hatred, designed to injure Christians and suppress the Church. He was on his way to persecute Christians at Damascus when he was confronted by the Lord Jesus. This eventually led Paul to give his life wholeheartedly to Jesus Christ. At this time, he realised that persecuting the Church was a sinful act. From then onwards, Paul carried the message of salvation to the Gentile world.

Examples of Christians Enduring the World's Hatred

Paul and first Christians were hated by the world

The worst charge against the followers of Jesus Christ, who were first named Christians at Antioch (Acts 11:26), was that they proclaimed as Lord and Messiah the One who had suffered a death cursed by the Jewish law (Deuteronomy 21:22-23).

On their missionary trip, Paul and Silas first stopped at Philippi, a colony of Macedonia; and even though the magistrates imprisoned them, Paul went on to plant a church. In Thessalonica, they formed a church and serious trouble broke out. They were accused of rebelling against the Roman emperor by proclaiming Jesus Christ as his rival, and were forced to leave. Even though the Apostle Paul moved southward to Berea, the opponents from Thessalonica pursued them, forcing them to flee from city to city.

Paul stayed for 18 months in the wicked city of Corinth where there were many converts. While he was there, a new Roman proconsul, Gallio, arrived to take up residence in Corinth. The Apostle Paul was prosecuted before the new Roman proconsul, Gallio, and was charged with preaching an illegal religion, but the charge was dismissed.

After Paul arrived in Jerusalem, he was attacked by a mob in the Temple area. He was rescued by a detachment of Roman soldiers who kept him in custody. He spent the next two years in Caesarea, then he was sent to Rome under house arrest. Although the Apostle Paul faced restrictions in his house arrest, he still assisted in the furtherance of the gospel. Later when he was placed in the prison of Caesar's palace, he wrote, "But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel" (Philippians 1:12).

Some churches are really appreciated by the world, whilst others, standing firm, are despised by the world. Many churches have incorporated methods and practices of the world. Due to their compromise of the Word of God, there is no challenge against sin, just an "all-inclusive-gospel."

Some have compromised God's Word and have not stood against abortion. They have remained silent and lack the courage to stand for an evil taking of life rather than the preservation of life. Some churches have remained silent on the homosexual issue and even allowed practising homosexuals to be leaders of the church. Some churches are afraid to challenge the moral issues that consume the congregation.

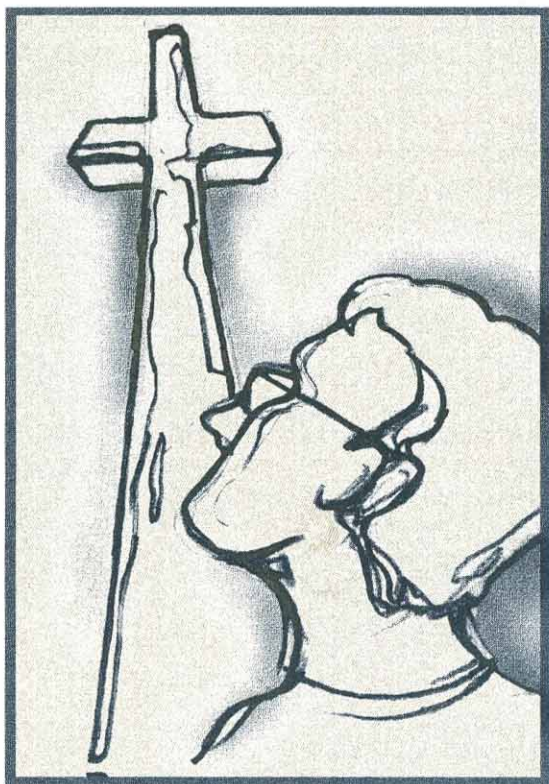
Some have welcomed the kind of music played in discotheques and places of sensual entertainment into the church. Undiscerning "Christians" celebrate even cultic events such as Halloween, without considering their history or effects on their spiritual life.

Many churches have forgotten the history of Reformation and great men of God who gave their lives in the battle for the Bible against the Roman Catholic Church. They have forgotten the Inquisition and the atrocities upon truly born again Bible-believing Christians.

Let all the faithful Christians take heed of what the Word of God says, "Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you" (1 John 3:13).

Look to No Man, Care Not What the World May Plan

Joshua Lim



One of the choruses, which I love to sing with God's people, is as follows:

*"Never fear! He is near!
Look to no man,
Care not what the world may plan;
Only trust in the Lord,
All the way to Beulah land."*

This Chorus has been a tremendous source of strength and comfort to me in my Christian life and my service to the Lord my God.

What a blessed thought and comfort to my heart when I call to remembrance the words in the Chorus in my moments of great disappointment. It reassures me that whatever befalls me, Jesus will see me through. Yea, come what may, rain or shine, loved or unloved, accepted or

unaccepted, in whatever things I do or say for the truth, the Lord my God will see me through and lead me to the beautiful land one day, a land where God, my loving Father, is awaiting me and you, too. On that beautiful day, my God shall wipe away all our tears, sorrow, pain and there shall be no more death (Revelation 21:4).

Brethren, with this blessed hope in us, let us press on with our faith and trust in Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. While He gives us breath, let us do our utmost to please the Lord and not man. The Apostle Paul has set an example for us to follow. He says: "If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ" (Galatians 1:10). We, like Paul, as the servants of God, ought to do likewise. Nothing should make us or influence us to please man in our service to the Lord.

In His bountiful grace, the Lord gives us strength sufficient to do the jobs, which He has entrusted to church leaders and members alike. For God knows the limitations in each of His children, young and old. He will not call upon us to do, or bear, what we cannot do. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Corinthians 10:13). Therefore, we need not fear the tasks given to us nor the execution of our duties and responsibilities. So long as we do all things with clean hands and pure hearts, we should not be disturbed by what others may do to us - fault-finding, gossiping, etc. "He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully" (Psalm 24:4). Leave them all to God. He

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will, in His own time, deal with them according to their words and conduct.

The word of God is very clear to those who harbour malice and ulterior motives: "Your sin will find you out" (Numbers 32:23) should be a timely reminder to all concerned.

Therefore, my brethren, be strong and be of good courage, for the Lord our God will bless and honour all who serve Him faithfully, honestly, sincerely and without fear of man. With Christ by our side, we shall fear neither evil nor the onslaughts of men, who are out to undermine our stand for the truth and His righteousness. With our anchors firmly secured to Christ the Solid Rock, we shall overcome the storms of life, be they hurricanes or typhoons. For He, who is able to keep us from falling, will preserve us till the very end and present us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, both now and ever (Jude 24, 25). Our God is faithful and He will keep His word, which is settled in heaven.

In the meantime, while we earnestly await His glorious return, let us be vigilant as we press on relentlessly toward the mark of our high calling in Christ Jesus. We must not be slothful in His business nor ignore the tasks entrusted to us. Always speak the truth in love, and be fervent in spirit while serving the Lord. Press on with a yielding and willing heart and march on to where He wants us to go and do what He wants us to do, even in the face of oppositions, from within or without. Let us arise and take up the cross of suffering for His sake even as we march on under the Banner of Christ and Him crucified. Amen.

Living a Moral Life in an Immoral Society

Prabhudas Koshy

The Conflicting Moral Standard

What is immorality? Is there such a thing called "morality"? Many think that to describe someone as being immoral is to pass judgment on their actions and therefore being judgmental. In this world, there seems to be increasingly no definite standard of right behaviour. We often hear in these days that, "what appears right for one would appear evil to another." The various countries and societies that we live in have varying and sometimes conflicting standards. So it becomes almost impossible to have a common benchmark for establishing morality. Therefore, the immediate challenge we face today is, who determines what is the right behaviour?

The Constant Moral Standard

This difficulty is removed when we ignore the man-made laws or conventions. If we focus our attention on the standard that the Creator of this universe has set, there is a clear and unchanging standard for man to live by. God's standard is consistent throughout His Word, from the Old Testament to the New. His own holiness is the standard. In Leviticus 20:7-8, we read, "Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: for I am the LORD your God. And ye shall keep my statutes, and do them: I am the LORD which sanctify you." The children of Israel were to be like their Creator.

The New Testament Christians also have the same standard. The Apostle Peter restates this principle in 1 Peter 1:15-16, "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation (behaviour or conduct); Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy." To be sanctified or holy is to be set apart for a specific divine purpose. This means that those who would be pleasing to their Creator, must separate themselves from the standards of the world they live in, and be conformed to the principles which God has set forth in His Word.

Jesus said, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). This goal of perfection should be our heart's ambition. The Lord Jesus is the only example of a perfect life. When we consider the abject wickedness that surrounds us, we must never become smug and hypocritical, but realise that we can only be acceptable in the sight of God, our Creator, by His forgiveness of our sins.

The Collapsing Moral Standard

We are constantly surrounded by the modern world's immorality such that we are immune to its enormity. We are often like a frog that is in a pot of water that is being heated. The creature is unable to feel the slow rising of the water's temperature until it is dangerously hot. When we live in an increasingly sinful world, we also seem to lose the awareness of sin in our lives. The subtle indoctrination we are fed on a daily basis by the media and the

blatant flaunting of gross immorality gradually being accepted as the norm, all numb our senses till our souls are fully entrapped.

Lot, by a slow process, found himself surrounded by a society that was so abhorrent in God's sight that it had to be eradicated. His choice of Sodom-Gomorra was a tragic mistake for it was surrounded by a wicked environment.

Look at the process by which Lot got entrapped in Sodom and Gomorra. He looked from a distance (Genesis 13:10), he chose that area and journeyed toward it (verse 11), he then lived close to Sodom (verse 12). We next find him living in the city (Genesis 14:12), and was eventually part of the establishment of Sodom (Genesis 19:1). We make little compromises in our lives, we justify thoughts or actions, and before we know it, we are not set apart for our God, but entangled in the things of the world. The deliverance of Lot by the mercy of God is spoken of by Peter. "And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorra into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds)" (2 Peter 2:6-8).

Lot had made a mistake by taking his family into this immoral environment. As a result, his conscience bothered him daily, but still he did not change his situation. His life was spared by the intervention of Abraham, the friend of God, but in reality he lost everything. What a frightening picture for us and our families in this ever degenerating age.

The root word "Sodom" is passed into the English language to portray actions and people who engage in deviant sexual behaviour. The laws of most countries contain penalties for people who commit such acts. Unfortunately, societies do not condemn these actions as they once did. They now look at a homosexual relationship as a matter of sexual orientation and preference, and if we discriminate in any way against

people with such a lifestyle, we are in danger of having the weight of the law upon us. It is not something that is done in secret any more, but openly flaunted, encouraged and advocated. In many countries, there are many openly "gay" and lesbian politicians, clergy, radio broadcasters, entertainers and other people with prominent positions in their societies. However, the word of God leaves no doubt as to how our Creator views these actions.

The Condemnation of the Present Moral Standard

In a section of God's law dealing with sexual relations, this is what we are told about homosexuality. "If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them" (Leviticus 20:13). In the New Testament, Paul tells us how mankind has rejected their Creator and as a result sunk into many forms of depravity, suffering the consequences.

"For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet" (Romans 1:26-27).

In our age, we have seen a "recompence of error" in the scourge of AIDS that is so common among those that practise these abominations. At the end of a long list of characteristics that portray our world well, Paul ends by saying, "... who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them" (Romans 1:32).

The Cause for Collapsing Moral Standard

There are two facts of life that human beings have a hard time accepting – responsibilities

and consequences. We do not like to take responsibility for our actions, but do our best to place the blame on any other party. This principle is portrayed by our first parents in the garden of Eden. When we finally accept responsibility for our actions, we do not like to suffer the consequences. These two facts of life come into play in the immorality of the age we live in.

In Galatians 5:19-21, Paul gives a list of actions that are abhorrent in the sight of God. All the things listed will prohibit our entrance into the kingdom of God; both immorality and murder bring the same result. This means that the accepted lifestyles of the societies we live in are a death sentence to those practising them. This also applies to those who vicariously engage in sex and violence through books, videos and television in the privacy of their own homes and minds.

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things” (Philippians 4:8).

God has created man with sexual desires, and in His Word, He has laid out the way we are to satisfy them. They are only to be satisfied within a marriage relationship between a man and woman. This godly principle has been abrogated by our modern world, where virginity and chastity are conditions that are the exception and not the rule. People now live together and have partners, not husbands or wives.

Pre-marital sex and affairs involving married couples are again common things in our societies. God's Word tells us these things are wrong, and that “love” does not make them right. In fact, our Lord takes it beyond actions to the thought processes that are behind them. “Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart” (Matthew 5:27-28).

There were consequences for these actions in times past such as venereal disease and unmarried mothers. With modern medicine and the advent of the pill, the possibility of suffering the consequences of our actions has been greatly reduced. The practice of abortion as a means of ending unwanted pregnancies among unmarried women has the complete backing of the societies we live in. The social stigma that went with these practices has also almost vanished.

The Correction of Collapsing Moral Standard

Where does this leave people who are trying to do that which is right in the sight of God? They appear abnormal to the world around them as each day passes, and the subtle indoctrination suffered makes it harder to follow the right way. We have not considered other immoral acts like stealing, lying and gambling, but have reserved our attention for sexual matters. Things will not get better till the Son of God returns to this earth, and until He does, we must keep these principles clear in our minds and do our best to follow them.

No matter what state you are now in, God is willing to work with you if you repent of your sins. Paul makes this very clear to the believers in Corinth. “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

We pray to our God that we would all avail ourselves of this cleansing, and walk worthy of the love our God has shown to us till His Son returns.





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