

MUST WE CHANGE OR DIE?

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Try as they may to conceal it, the infidelity of liberalism betrays itself in many ways. They insist that they believe the Bible is inspired, but their concept of inspiration is not even close to the biblical doctrine of inspiration. The claim that the church must change, or it will die is one of many clues disclosing their lack of trust in the agelessness of God's revealed wisdom.

If the Bible were the product of mere men, such a contention would be valid. Man's wisdom is so limited he is incapable of developing guidelines for living which are apropos to every culture of every age through all time. Indeed, he can't devise a perfect pattern for living for even one generation. The combined efforts of all the social scientists in this last decade of the twentieth century can't even produce a consensus of how life ought to be lived.

Man's best insights, which have been incorporated in religious creeds and social mores over the last fifty years, are seriously flawed and have spawned chaos in American society. We are reaping the harvest of this atheistic humanism in the grim statistics blasted across the media every day. Crime is covering us up and the courts are helpless. People are arming themselves because they think the law enforcement agencies cannot protect them. Drugs are everywhere. Sexual license is rampant. It is difficult to find an adult who has not been divorced at least once. Children are abused, misused, abandoned, and murdered by the millions each year. The prisons are full. Teenage hoodlums terrorize whole neighborhoods. If righteousness exalts a nation and sin is a reproach to any people (Pro. 14:34), America's shame defies description. This deplorable situation is the fruit of situation ethics embedded in every facet of life, from religion to business to politics, and we are left with a bankrupt social and moral conscience.

America's religious denominations have changed. They have totally abandoned what little of true Christianity they at one time embraced. They never did submit to the authority of Christ's teaching, but now they openly hold the moral standard of Christianity in contempt, and consider all New Testament teaching as only the wisdom of men.

Since all human efforts require periodic revision, people who believe the Bible is the handiwork of men naturally think it too is subject to imperfections and must also be updated at times. This is precisely the attitude the liberal holds. These infidels may claim the thoughts or ideas of the Bible are inspired, but the very words are not; hence, they insist the Bible contains the word of God, but the words used in the original autographs are not the very words the Holy Spirit of God moved those men to write.

Naturally, those who think the Bible was devised by man hold the authority claimed in the Bible in contempt. If the scriptures are only the sentiments of opinionated, chauvinistic men who lived 2,000 or more years ago, why should we be bound by the out-moded taboos of any ancient culture? Such an ethic may have

sufficed for that day, but, they insist, it is totally inadequate for our sophisticated, complex society.

In contrast to this infidelity, we believe the claims the Bible makes—that it is, in fact, the product of God’s infinite wisdom, knowledge, and power. Man is incapable of producing a perfect set of rules by which everyone in every culture, in every age, can live; but God, in His infinite wisdom and knowledge can and He has. This is why Jesus said that heaven and earth would pass away, but His word would not (Mat. 24:35). Because it is the fruit of the infinite wisdom and knowledge of God, it cannot be improved—ever. To insist it needs revision, or should be supplanted, is to deny that God’s knowledge and wisdom is infinite. Such a belief is blasphemy. It is a rejection of the claims of Christ and His apostles and is therefore a rejection of the God of the Bible (Luke 10:16; 1 The. 4:8). One who holds such a view is an infidel (an unbeliever) to the religion of Jesus Christ!

These infidels insist they only want to cleanse the church of obsolete, useless traditions. This sounds innocent on the surface—even commendable. After all, who would want to be bound by unneeded, worn-out practices which actually hinder the cause of Christ? Some traditions may need to be abandoned or at least modified. However, a close look at what they are calling “traditions,” reveals they are not talking about traditional methods we have used to do the Lord’s will over the years. By “traditions,” they mean the facts, commands, and patterns for practicing Christianity given in the scriptures. They want to revise and/or abandon the teaching (doctrine) of the New Testament!

They do not believe New Testament doctrine has any permanence but is on the same level with the doctrines of men. Since men must revise, alter, or abandon their teachings to fit the constantly shifting moral or social climate, these infidels think God’s eternal word should be subject to the same criteria. They see the church of our Lord as one denomination among many and no better than any. It may even be worse; at least, that is the way their vicious, hateful criticism sounds. This is why they are insisting the church must change or it will die.

If fact, the very opposite is true. The only way the church will not die is to remain true to the Lord and His doctrine. Jesus said the very gates of hell would not prevail against His kingdom (Mat. 16:18) and that it would stand till the end of time when Christ would deliver it up to the Father (1 Cor. 15:24). On the other hand, Jesus assures us: **“Every plant which my heavenly Father planted not, shall be rooted up”** (Mat. 15:13).

In the final analysis, it comes down to this: who will you believe—Jesus Christ and His apostles or the claims of infidels whose faith has been ship-wrecked? Let us put it another way; do you want to be saved or follow infidels to destruction?

Deceased