
Words of Truth

“You” Not “We”

By: Brian A. Yeager

Back in May I received some emails from a man claiming to be a deacon in the body of Christ. Based on the things he wrote in his emails I thought it best to have a phone conversation with him to see whether or not he was really willing to be taught (Proverbs 9:8, Matthew 7:6, I Corinthians 3:1-3, etc.). I also wanted to learn what knowledge he had and where to begin teaching him if he were willing to learn (Mark 4:33). It did not take long to find out that Mr. Haas was a traditionalist amongst apostate, denominationally minded churches of Christ. Such is certainly wrong (Mark 7:1-9 and Colossians 2:18-23).

In Dwight Haas' emails and on the phone, he talked of sinful things that he and the congregation he assembles with are doing. He also talked of inconsistencies that he and the congregation he assembles with are engaging in. Yet, when he talked about those things, he used the word “we” and included me and us in his statements. He talked as though all churches of Christ are involved in inconsistencies and unscriptural practices.

Dwight's reasoning is not limited to him. In many conversations I have had over the years with people in error, I have noticed that they like to include all churches of Christ in their allegations. A man by the name of Ray Allestad from Columbus, MT wrote me not long ago doing similar things that Dwight did. Ray however is not a member of the body of Christ. His wife is or was (she seems to have fallen away from what he wrote). When Ray wrote me he challenged that churches of Christ are blind to the truth and that we err in saying we cannot add to the Scriptures. He went on to say that “all of you” (meaning churches of Christ) don't even practice what you preach. He is right about some, even many, but not us!

Brethren, it is a shame that many churches of Christ have fallen away. That is not a new thing however. In the first two chapters of the book of Revelation, five out of seven congregations addressed were erring in the faith (Revelation 2:1-3:22). Apostasy always has been and always will be a major conflict we have to deal with. The reputation of our Lord's body will always be dragged through the mud. Therefore, we need to be proficient in loudly declaring that it is “they” or “them”, not “we” or “us” when it comes to errors amongst churches of Christ.

More Than Saying It

Hypocrisy will always be practiced amongst those proclaiming to be God's people. We can see such existed in the first century (Matthew 7:1-5 and Romans 2:1-29). It certainly exists today as well. Therefore, we must do more than just say that we aren't included in the errors that exist among churches of Christ. We also have to show it by our conduct (Proverbs 4:18, Matthew 5:14-16, I Corinthians 9:27, Philippians 2:14-16, I Thessalonians 2:12, I Timothy 4:16, and James 1:21-25). Understanding that, let's discuss some points of application.

“They” Are Erring, Not “We”

The Bella Vista church of Christ says: “We must acknowledge our sins. We are sinners” (<http://www.churchofchristusa.com/WhoWeAre.aspx>). The Cedars church of Christ says: “First, we are all sinners... Thus, every member at Cedars is an imperfect person” (<http://cedarschurchofchrist.org/welcome>). The West Metro church of Christ says: “Not a single one of us is perfect; we are all sinners” (<http://www.westmetrochurch.org/>). I could cite hundreds, if not thousands, of more examples like these. The deacon from the Woodlands church of Christ boasted in email and on the phone that he is a sinner, that sins all the time. Comments like these are what the world hears and sees from those professing to be members of the body of Christ. What the world needs to SEE from US is that WE are not all sinners like they are (II Timothy 2:19, I Peter 1:13-16, and II Peter 3:10-14). After all, that is exactly what God demands to be seen in us (John 8:1-11, Romans 6:1-2, I Corinthians 15:34, II Corinthians 7:1, Ephesians 1:4, Titus 2:11-14, and I Peter 4:1-2).

The Forest Park church of Christ says this: “Churches of Christ speak where the Bible speaks and remain silent where it is silent. They do Bible things in Bible ways and call Bible things by Bible names” (<http://www.forrestpark.org/pages/aboutChurch.htm>). Yet, when you look at their website they have a secretary and cleaning person on their “staff” (http://www.forrestpark.org/pages/Local_staff.htm). Where does the Bible speak of those things? What “Bible name” are those things taken from? This same church has “ministries” such as “Benevolence & Disaster Relief”, “College Ministry”, “Committees”, “Education”, “Family Life Groups”, etc. (<http://www.forrestpark.org/pages/local.htm>). What Scriptures speak of those things? This group claims to speak for “churches of Christ”. WE need to allow our conduct to speak louder than their hypocrisies. We need to show people that we will not add or remove from the Scriptures (Deuteronomy 4:2, Deuteronomy 12:32, Proverbs 30:5-6, Jeremiah 7:30-31, Matthew 4:4, Matthew 28:18-20, Luke 11:28, Galatians 1:6-12, and Revelation 22:18-19). We can do such by really doing and speaking only those things authorized by our Lord (Colossians 3:17; cf. Luke 6:46).

The Elmwood church of Christ says: “We don't all agree on everything at Elmwood, but you'll find that our congregation is a very safe place for discussions about those areas in which we don't agree to take place and, when it comes down to it, we unite over the things we have in common - most importantly the blood, love, and grace of Christ - and put our differences aside” (<http://www.faithstreet.com/church/elmwood-church-of-christ-lafayette>). We cannot let them speak for us. We need to SHOW the world that we actually follow the commands in God in being truly united in thought, word, and practice (Psalms 133:1, Amos 3:3, Mark 3:24, Romans 15:6, I Corinthians 1:10, Philippians 2:2, Philippians 3:16, and I Peter 3:8).

Conclusion

Brethren, many churches of Christ have run the reputation of our Lord's body into the dirt. The answer is not to run and hide, but to stand and show forth the truth that our Lord's body still exists today in the purity He desires (Ephesians 5:25-27). Understand therefore, we have a large task in front us to show this city and the world that WE are not like THEM! Our Lord is always watching (Proverbs 15:3). He is not alone though. The world is watching too. Put on more than a show. Live right before their eyes (I Thessalonians 2:10). We cannot allow them to speak for us!