
Words of Truth

Blurring The Lines Of Truth And Error

By: Brian A. Yeager

The word of God teaches us to be a people that are plain in speech (II Corinthians 3:12). Our teaching and work of the Lord should be done in such a way that people can clearly hear and understand what we're doing (Nehemiah 8:8 and II Corinthians 4:1-2). As individual Christians, we are lights to the world (Matthew 5:14-16). Collectively, as the church, we are the pillar and ground of the truth (I Timothy 3:15). What are we doing if people see and hear us and the messages we are sending are contradictory (Romans 2:1-29)?

There are many troubling trends amongst churches of Christ. There are many traditions that are causing congregations to fail (cf. Mark 7:1-9 and Colossians 2:19-23). The one I am going to use is in no way to be considered greater or lesser of a threat to the truth than the many others I could have cited (James 2:10-12). That being said, what do you think when you read this statement from a "bulletin" of a supposed congregation that professes to belong to Christ: "NEXT SUNDAY – OCTOBER 20th – There will be a potluck immediately after morning worship services @ Glen Dale Community Center Park. Please talk with one of the Deacons regarding what is needed for the meal. Please talk with Sheldon Smith to make a donation to rent the facility. Directions to the center will be made available the day of the potluck. REMEMBER: We will come together again for services @ 3pm, NOT 6pm on October 20th" (<http://www.wildercroftcoc.org/media/uploads/articles/2013/10/cb20131013.pdf>).

The first time I read this statement above I thought, "what a bunch of liberals". The top of the paper that this statement appeared in says: "The Weekly Bulletin Of The Wildercroft Church Of Christ". Therefore, it is obvious that this "potluck" (an idea that is nowhere in the Bible) is considered by this church to be a work of the church. It is announced by the church, overseen by the deacons, and it even alters the meeting times of the church. The preacher and elders of this congregation, along with the members, are part of this unauthorized work of the church there. They are not allowing the Scriptures to be their only source of authority (Matthew 28:18-20, Luke 4:4, Luke 6:46, Luke 11:28, Ephesians 1:22-23, Ephesians 5:10, Colossians 1:18, Colossians 3:17, I Peter 4:11, and Revelation 22:18-19). Yet, that same "bulletin" says this: "A Going Church For A Coming Lord, Which Does All That The Lord Authorizes!" What a joke (not in a funny, ha, ha kind of way either)!

The Wildercroft church of Christ has a known, marked (Romans 16:17-18), false teacher in the pulpit (Antoine Holloway). Thus, it is no surprise to me that they do things such as "Church Potlucks". The website of that group has several false doctrines on it (i.e. continual cleansing, all people sin, and the modern day miraculous working of the Holy Spirit - documentation available upon request). The one thing that caused me to use this erring group as an example is that many so-called "churches of Christ", that think they're "sound", do similar things with "potlucks". Their main error is that they think because they're not doing it "in the

church building” that it is then right. I know that is the thinking because I talked with a man associated with that group of people. That is an ignorant conclusion. The location is not the issue. What the church does and does not do is not just tied to a building.

The Building Is Not The Issue!

The church may assemble in many different types of places. The church in the first century assembled in privately owned houses (Romans 16:3-5, Colossians 4:15, and Philemon 2) as well as in public places (Acts 20:7-9). The church may assemble for many different reasons. Worship is the obvious, but the church may also assemble to practice discipline (Matthew 18:15-17). The church may also assemble to sing and pray (I Corinthians 14:15-16 and Ephesians 5:19). The church may also assemble to hear reports about the work of faithful preachers (Acts 14:26-28). The church may assemble to discuss how to help erring brethren, even in other locations, come to the truth (Acts 15:1-35). However, regardless of the location, the church MAY NOT assemble together for social meals (I Corinthians 11:22-34).

When brethren want to participate in social affairs, they should do so under their own oversight, planning, etc. This is called hospitality. Hospitality is a work of individual disciples, not the local church. Notice: *“And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us... Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality... Let brotherly love continue. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for there by some have entertained angels unawares... Use hospitality one to another without grudging”* (Acts 16:14-15, Romans 12:13, Hebrews 13:1-2, and I Peter 4:9).

For those reading this article that think location is all that matters, how consistent are you in that conclusion? Would you say the church can use mechanical instruments of music for worship if it’s not “in the building”? Would you say women can be preachers if it’s not “in the building”? I would imagine that most who cannot see the truth on “potlucks”, amongst churches of Christ, would point out that women cannot preach anywhere amongst mixed assemblies (I Corinthians 14:34-35 and I Timothy 2:11-12). I would also imagine that those same people would be quick to point out Ephesians 5:19 in regards to singing regardless of location. To those people, this is why you send mixed signals. Traditions that you practice without regard to truth or consistency is your downfall. Additionally, it shall lead to the fall of others of which you all will be condemned together (Matthew 15:14).

Conclusion

Man is inconsistent when walking to their own standards (Proverbs 21:2). That is why the standard of God must be used in all things (II Timothy 3:16-17). God’s standard says the kingdom is not about food and drink (Romans 14:17). This is why here, we never announce social things that we do as individuals. We don’t blur the lines of truth and error! When people look at what we do as a congregation, they must see spiritual work being done rather than social activities that God has left aside from the work of the church. What we do as Christians must be separate from what we do as the church (cf. I Timothy 5:3-16).