

WORDS OF TRUTH

A Weekly Bulletin for the Sunrise Acres church of Christ

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Edited By: Brian A. Yeager



Sunrise Acres **CHURCH OF CHRIST**

Meeting at:
8625 Robert Drive
El Paso, TX 79904

915-525-5794

OUR MEETING TIMES:

Sunday Bible Class: 9:45 AM
Sunday Worship: 10:55 AM

Are You Visiting With Us?

If you are visiting with us, we want to welcome you to the Lord's church (Matthew 16:18 and Colossians 1:18). Our goal is to simply get to Heaven and to help you do the same. We use the Bible as our standard to govern what we do in our work and worship for the Lord (Colossians 3:17, II Timothy 1:13, II Timothy 3:16-17, and I Peter 4:11).

We welcome your questions and would love the opportunity to study further with you. Luke recorded a fascinating statement we all need to consider: *"Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them, strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able"* (Luke 13:23-24). We invite you to join us in being one of the few that are saved!

Is Teaching The Erring A Covert Operation?

By: Brian A. Yeager

Several years ago I received a phone call from a preacher who had "left liberalism" for "the truth" (Don Toth). He said he was looking for a church of the "Non-Institutional persuasion" with whom to work and was asking if I had heard of any looking for a preacher. I have struggled for years in understanding how someone leaves one party to join another, but such was the case with this fellow. I was reluctant to share anything I knew of until I had heard more from this man. As we talked things sounded pretty good. Until he began telling me how he visited a congregation in Arkansas and that they were impressed with his style of reaching out to those in the error of Institutionalism.

He proceeded by telling me just how he planned to bring people out of liberalism if asked to work with this group in Arkansas. He said he met a principal of a local elementary school who was a member of a church there that was liberal. He said they hit it off well and enjoyed good talks. He said he stayed away from Bible issues they disagreed on hoping that if he came back they could be friends and he could work "covertly" to convert him. At the same time, he explained how he had many preacher friends he'd hope to do the same with who were still in liberalism and for this reason he did not want his "repentance" of teaching liberalism to be well-known.

I explained that when Paul left his errors behind, he made no secret about his change in doctrine. He had once persecuted Christians (Acts 8:1-4; 9:1-2 and Galatians 1:13) and now he very publicly proclaimed the doctrine he had previously considered heresy (Acts 9:17-24 and Galatians 1:23). However, Don still believed that his military intelligence background could be used more fully for the Lord if he kept who and what he was, a secret. He said he was good at "sneak attacks" and more could be accomplished if people were unaware of what side he was on. I shouldn't have to write anymore from this point forward. However, if you think about it, many engage in the same covert "evangelism tactics" as does Don Toth! This is error!

The “Undercover” Evangelism Mindset

Which of the following is correct? 1. “And Jesus went about all Galilee, sneaking into their synagogues, and planning on slowly teaching the gospel of the kingdom, and not healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people in case somebody figured out who he was and what side he was playing for”. 2. “And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people”. You’d do well to check Matthew 4:23 before you answer. I left out the italics I normally use in Scripture quotes so I did not give away the answer. Really, did you even have to look it up? Were you at all fooled by the perversion in number one? Truly, I would think any Christian would easily see the error of number one. In fact, Jesus was very much open in teaching and did not play the secret evangelism service game. To be clear, read what Jesus Himself said: *“The high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine. Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said”* (John 18:19-21).

Being subtle is a tool of the devil (II Corinthians 11:3). False teachers are the ones who pretend to be something they are not (Matthew 7:15-20 and Acts 20:28-31). Error has to creep in undercover (II Peter 2:1-3 and Jude 3-4). Teaching the truth is to be done in the open (Acts 5:42). In fact, we should proclaim the truth “from the housetops” (Matthew 10:27), not within the broom closet (Luke 11:33). The power to convert the erring is found in the Gospel (Psalms 19:7 and Romans 1:16), not a sneak attack. Yet, this tactic really is used often. People will not outright tell someone what they need to hear. Instead, they try to “lower defenses” and come in when their prey is unsuspecting. Sounds horrible, doesn’t it? However, if you are trying to sneak the truth to someone when they are not knowingly participating that is exactly what you’re doing. Now, your integrity becomes a question.

When you are inviting someone over to watch a ballgame and you have also invited “the preacher” in hopes of converting someone, how honest have you been? When you tell someone you want to be their friend, but in fact you want to convert them, how honest have you been? Are you going to be their friend when they tell you to take a leap off a cliff with your Bible in hand? Is sneaking a tract into someone’s magazine rack really evangelism? Brethren, aren’t we supposed to be honest (Romans 12:17 and Hebrews 13:18)? Notice what the Apostle Paul wrote: *“Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God”* (II Corinthians 4:1-2).

The Lord never instructed us to hide our lights when among those whom we want to teach. In fact, He taught the opposite of that false view (Matthew 5:13-16 and Philippians 2:15-16). Our Lord never instructed us to hide the truth for any period of time. Again, He taught the exact opposite (Mark 16:15-16, Colossians 1:27-28, and II Timothy 4:2). Furthermore, our Lord never instructed any preacher of the Gospel to befriend sinners so that one could later sneak attack them with the truth. In fact, we read the exact opposite in the Scriptures (Ephesians 5:1-11).

Conclusions

Faithful Christians could never hide who they really are (John 3:19-21 and Titus 2:11-14). Nor would anyone who really loves the souls of men wait until a later date to teach someone who is lost (Proverbs 27:1 and James 4:13-14). Brethren, anyone with half of a brain can see that evangelism is not a covert operation!

What must one do to be saved (Acts 2:37)? Hear and believe the Gospel (Mark 16:15-16 & Romans 10:17), repent of their sins (Acts 3:19), confess Christ (Acts 8:37), and be baptized (immersed) for the remission of sins into the church of Christ (Acts 2:38-41; 47, I Corinthians 12:12-13, and Romans 6:1-6; 16:16). One must then remain faithful (Colossians 1:23).