

a question in more ways than it can be asked. They are masters at clothing their answers in terms that sound true to the Word. They have become proficient in what the political world identifies as spin. For example, in response to a question on divorce and remarriage, a person encased in the spirit of liberalism may say, "I believe Matthew 19:9." That would be equivalent to a Baptist preacher affirming, "I believe Mark 16:16." However, what they believe about these texts is not based on the actual truth's being taught, but only their perspective of it. Ascertaining liberalism's convictions on any Bible subject demands very specific questions that leave no room for equivocation.

A man reveals much about himself in the manner in which he deals with questions. For many years, a congregation had been faithfully supporting a missionary who made frequent trips to various foreign mission points. Having received word that his convictions on a vital matter of biblical teaching were not in accord with truth, they sent a questionnaire in hopes of determining exactly what he believed. Instead of respectfully answering the questions in compliance with divine imperative (I Pet. 3:15), and as an expression of appreciation for many years of faithful "fellowship in the gospel" (Phil. 1:5), he branded the questions as an "insult to his integrity." He declared, "No preacher, elder, or any person will force me to answer such a questionnaire." It is incomprehensible that any Christian would refuse to give what he believes to be God's answer to any Bible question. Such a man is not worthy of support from the people of God.

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We have just received a shipment of books on fundamentals of the faith that are excellent for work in prisons. It was written by a man who obeyed the gospel while in prison. He writes on the simplicity of the faith with power. If you want or need copies for your prison work, BCC, or other, please write to Randall Standefer, P.O. Box 123, Dunlap, TN 37327

BULLETIN BRIEFS

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THE PERMISSIVE SOCIETY

Andrew Connally

The permissive society has entered the church. There was a time when men who taught instrumental music was a matter of opinion, that sincerity in worship was enough, ... had at least the common courtesy to get out of the church. They at least had the courtesy and conviction to know that they did not stand with us and they got out. But no longer is that true. Under the guise of the brotherhood and orthodoxy and under the coattails of their elders, they are harping and carping and sniping at the doctrine that men have defended for hundreds of years, not because it is traditionalism, but because it is true and, brethren, I say that permissive psychology is responsible for it. It is time our brethren felt that they could pick up the Bible and they could begin to look at it and see that what they have been doing is true. And if you don't think it is, you need to re-study your Bible. If it is true, you need to rise up against preachers, elders and anyone in the brotherhood that teaches otherwise (See II John 9-11).

Again, the very lifeblood of the church, its purity and simplicity are decried and denied, and the tragedy is that some brethren *love to have it so* (Jeremiah 5:31). They like it that way. They want a form of godliness (II Timothy 3:5), but they do not want it to confine them. They want to enjoy orthodoxy; "I'm a Christian; my membership is there; oh, I don't stand for anything; I don't go except when I want to and I don't really sacrifice, but I get all the blessings of a good clear conscience" when in reality their life is a shame and a disgrace. And in many instances gross immorality prevails and we sit around and allow it to continue.

Now I ask the question: Why has permissiveness become the standard? Because of the pursuit of worldly pleasure.

“That in the latter days grievous times shall come and men shall be lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God”

(II Timothy 3:1-4).

Brethren, that is the state we are in. Men love their pleasure more than they love God. First, whether it is Hell’s Angels, the devotees of James Bond or Hugh Hefner, founder of *Playboy* magazine, the users of LSD (or methamphetamine), or the weak church member who sits at home on Sunday night watching a TV program instead of coming to church to worship God, all exemplify our pursuit for pleasure! Oh, it may be a certain different degree, or you might say that watching TV on Sunday night is not like that, but it is still sin! It’s still sin. And on Wednesday night our buildings look like most of our brethren feel that some of us have caught smallpox and they don’t want to be associated with us. They are out because they are devotees of pleasure. They are in a hundred-thousand places doing anything their hearts desire, and woe betide the elder-ship or the gospel preacher that stands up and preaches against it!

The pursuit of sexual pleasure is just another avenue of the same old sins: self-gratification; selfishness; serving the god of pleasure. That’s why we have to teach our young people that their bodies are vessels unto honor and, therefore, they must sanctify themselves and keep themselves for the Master’s use (See Galatians 5:19-21; 2 Thess. 4:3-5).

Our preoccupation with sports is another example of our permissive society. How long do you think it would take to rally a hundred thousand Christians for a gospel meeting? We can get a hundred thousand out to watch the Dallas Cowboys (or the Titans) play, can’t we? It is because of our preoccupation with sports, because pleasure is our god and the god of so many others. It reached an all-time high when, in 1967, the NFL championship was played by the Green Bay Packers and the Dallas Cowboys and people by the thousands sat in minus seventeen-degree weather to watch that football game. You couldn’t get children of God to go out and sit in zero-degree weather to hear a gospel sermon, at least in the majority of instances. It is because we have a preoccupation with pleasure. Our attitude is that our only real sin is just being bored. Therefore, anything that keeps me from being bored is worthy of my greatest ambition. Whole cities are dedicated to its pursuit. Las Vegas, long the domain of illicit sex, immorality, gamblers, quick marriages and quicker divorces has now become the “whole family” city. Now you can take the entire family there, baby sitter for the children, ski lodges for the young people while Mama and Daddy can gamble

and watch the nudie shows all included with the whole family plan. Brethren, if this is the “family plan” in America and if this represents American society, then we are gone already. It’s time that we recognize that our people must stand up and cry out against it. Because our jaded appetites must constantly be tugged, pushed and beaten into a new frenzy of pleasure, we feel that anything is worthwhile if it satisfies what *I want to do*.

What is the church’s obligation to the permissive society?...Mid McKnight, bless his heart, can get himself into some real situations where young preachers come and ask him, “Well, what’ll I do if I find an elder unqualified?” Mid says, “**Preach the word!**” “What’ll I do when I find a man and woman living in adultery in the congregation?” “**Preach the word!**” “What do you do when you find liberalism galloping in?” “**Preach the word!**” “What do you do in the face of a permissive society?” “**Preach the word!**” And brethren, we all ought to do it. It is not just a preacher’s obligation, or an elder’s or a deacon’s. It is the obligation of *every* child of God. Everyone of us are Christians and, therefore, every one of us has spheres of influence that no one else has. The Bible says to the young man Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:2-5:

“Preach the word, be urgent in season, and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but having itching ears will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts and turn aside from the truth unto fables. Be sober, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill thy ministry.”

NOTE: The above article was published in 1985 by National Christian Press. Brother Andrew Connally is deceased, but his material is perhaps more needed today than it was when he first spoke it.

MISSION FIELDS & LIBERALISM

Frank Chesser

Tragically, as Saul “made havoc of the church” (Acts 8:3), even so liberalism is having a calamitous influence on the church in mission areas all over the world. Liberalism is lazy. It seldom commences its own work. Liberalism is insidious. It had rather “creep” (Jude 4) in and steal a work established by the sacrifice and labor of faithful brethren or peel off sufficient numbers to begin with a good nucleus of their own.

Indeed, there are men laboring on mission fields whose doctrinal views are not consistent with the doctrinal soundness of the

elders and congregations who support them. They possess the “no big deal” spirit of liberalism relative to the use of the mechanical instrument in worship. They do not believe in the verbal inspiration of Scripture. They do not accept the exclusiveness of the church of the New Testament. They would have no hesitancy extending fellowship to denominational churches. They believe the Holy Spirit exerts an influence on men separate and apart from the Word of God. They would experience no disturbance of conscience with women leading prayer or serving communion in the assembly, or teaching a class in the presence of men. They would argue in favor of theistic evolution. They do not believe what Jesus taught on marriage, divorce, and remarriage.

Some of these brethren are permanent fixtures on the mission field. Others rotate back and forth, often carrying groups of people with them from one mission point to another. Frequently, their financial support comes from multiple congregations and/or individuals. These brethren know that their convictions are not compatible with those from whom they receive their support. They also know that if their convictions became known, their financial base would vanish. Is it honest for such a man to take money from faithful brethren, whose willingness to support him is based on their belief that they are “**perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment**”? (I Cor. 1:10). Is such conduct ethical, virtuous, and blameless, or deceitful and fraudulent? Suppose his convictions have changed since the initial agreement was made regarding his support. Does not honesty demand that he inform his supporters of his present doctrinal posture, hence allowing them the right to decide whether or not to continue his support? “**Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself**”? (Rom. 2:21).

Are elders not stewards of the finances given to God by members of the church who love the truth and who in good faith assume that they will properly dispense the funds in harmony with the will of God? Is it not the case that elders shall account to God for their responsibilities as stewards? Is it “**required in stewards that a man be found faithful**”? (I Cor. 4:2). Are elders faithful when they distribute God’s money without inquiring of the recipients as to their convictions on fundamental matters of biblical teaching? Are elders accountable to God for error planted in the minds of men by missionaries whom they support?

Men who have surrendered to the spirit of liberalism are as sly as a fox. In answer to a question, they can so clothe a response as to make it appear candid and straightforward, but in reality it is as crooked as the slither of a serpent. They are verbal magicians. They can answer

