

THE "NEW IMAGE" CHURCH OF CHRIST

We live in a day when many churches of Christ are dissatisfied with their "image" before the world. They want the church of Christ to be a successful, powerful, sophisticated society coming to the front as a leading church in the United States. They want this "new image" church of Christ to continually have the applaud of men and the popularity of the times. The sentiment among the leaders of the "new image" church of Christ is to have a "world-conforming" church (John 17: 14 - 18; John 18:36; I John 2: 15 - 17; I John 4:5; Rom. 12:2). They want preachers who are recognized as scholars and men of sophistication and broad-mindedness. These leaders do not want this "new image" church of Christ to be isolated in any respect -- they want it right in the middle of the mainstream of denominationalism. They also want the church to be socially involved -- to help right the social injustices found in the state and world.

Many of these "new image" leaders are looking for a broad base for fellowship -- one that will allow fellowship with the Christian church (which uses instrumental music in worship, besides all their other errors). It would also allow fellowship with premillennial churches of Christ. The end result of this broad-base fellowship is fellowship with all denominations! This is the ultimate end many of these leaders want because the liberal churches of Christ cannot have the position their leaders seek in the eyes of the denominational world until there is fellowship with denominationalism!

The leaders of the "new image" church of Christ have tasted their victory in the last ten years by carrying a large segment of the body of Christ across "the river of no return" from the principles of New Testament Christianity. They know now that this segment of people as a whole will not "abandon ship" no matter what innovations they bring in, so at last they are almost ready to take their place among modern denominationalism.

It is with sadness I have seen them "cross the Rubicon" (the point of no return), and at a distance I watch their further departures. As I stand filled with sorrow and hurt, I remember those days of fellowship and know that they can be no more. As I at a distance watch and listen, I hear perplexed and troubled souls moaning with great pain at the liberalism they see overwhelming the congregations of which they are a part. Their anxiety and uneasiness causes them on different occasions to vent their apprehensions -- even to one like me. On such occasions the only advice I can give is to "come out from among them" and stand with the many thousands of us who are firmly committed to oppose every innovation and trend you are involved in.

To those of us who stand against these trends and innovations, our service to God as He directs is a far greater thing than the popularity of men (Gal. 1:10). The hundreds of conservative congregations over the nation which have taken a stand for truth against these innovations are not concerned about projecting an image before the world. These churches revere and respect the New Testament image of the church. The churches of the New Testament were trying to please God, not the world (James 4:4). They challenged the world with the gospel instead of trying to put forth an image to please the world!

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