

WHAT IS RIGHT WITH IT?

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Those who are striving to change the Lord's church into a denomination are busy introducing into the worship of God all the elements of the "contemporary worship" model. Hand clapping, multiple song leaders or "praise team," philosophic talks devoid of scripture, breaking up the assembly on Sunday night to meet in homes to partake of the Lord's supper, a celebration atmosphere, and "social gospel" emphasis are all earmarks of the "contemporary worship"/Community Church movement. As brethren notice the encroachments and present their concerns to the leadership in defense of these things, they are being met with the question, "What's wrong with it?"

This is what happens when men-pleasers take charge (Eph. 6:6; Col. 3:22). Instead of receiving instruction as Samuel did to say, "Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth," or learning from the command of Christ, "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" in the absence of Divine revelation they arrogantly quip, "What's wrong with it?" (cf. I Sam. 3:9; Luke 6:46). This is the wrong approach to discovering God's will, and here is why.

First, an action already active is assumed to be appropriate. Amid an almost infinite number of actions which may be taken to ask, "What's wrong with it?" suggests the process of elimination be enacted until the wrong actions are at some indefinite point in the future finally set aside. If they are serious about it, they may never live long enough to discover God's will using this approach. Why look at that way when the Bible provides thorough knowledge to instruct the faithful in the heavenly calling? Peter wrote, "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue" (II Pet. 1:2-3).

Second, the action has not been examined carefully enough to already know whether it is right or wrong. Take hand clapping for example. We are hearing that the elders met and decided to allow it, so "what's wrong with it?" Because the elders where this practice is going on could not find in red letters the exact words, "You shall not clap your hands in worship," their ignorance of the scripture allows an unauthorized action. The wise man warned, "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine

heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few" (Eccles. 5:1-2). The Messianic prophet urged, "Seek ye out of the book of the LORD, and read . . . " (Isa. 34:16a).

Third, the burden of proof for suggesting a course of action falls on the one making the suggestion. Just because the Bible does not say in red letters, "You shall not clap your hands in worship," this fact does not mean that scripture allows the action. The scriptures must be "rightly divided" or "handled aright" to determine which actions are right (II Tim. 2:15). Paul taught, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (I Thess. 5:21). Peter said, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen" (I Pet. 4:11).

Four, it gives a false impression of an innate ability in man to know God's will apart from revelation. The question, "What's wrong with it?" is being asked because they "don't see anything wrong with it." Just because a sinful, self-serving human being does not see something wrong in an action does not make it right. Jeremiah gave the inspired observation, "O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. 10:23). In addition, Solomon wrote, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14:12). Even Job was impressed with his limitations when he answered his friend Bildad, "I know it is so of a truth: but how should man be just with God? If he will contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand" (Job 9:2-3). Isaiah gave the memorable words, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa. 55:8-9).

Many of the wrongs advanced today by those craving change would be righted if instead of asking the question, "What's wrong with it?" they would be obligated to answer, "What is right with it?" The advice of Jeremiah in the seventh century BC is still invaluable today, "Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein" (Jer. 6:16).

One great void in the "contemporary worship"/Community Church movement is they are weak on message. Herculean efforts have been mounted to stress the methodology of Willow Creek Community Church and Saddleback Community Church, but they have no distinctive message. Their money goes to please and

entertain their people. “Find out what people want and give it to them” is their motto. The Master mandated majoring on his message: “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen” (Matt. 28:18-20).