

TEACH NO OTHER DOCTRINE

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Among the instructions from an inspired apostle to a young evangelist are these remarks: “Charge some that they teach no other doctrine, Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do. Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm” (I Tim. 1:3-7).

In a vicious vituperation ostensibly on “The Function of Christian Doctrine” John Mark Hicks, a professor who teaches at two Christian schools, Lipscomb and Harding University Graduate School of Religion, blasts preaching that presents doctrine, polemical exchanges, and distinctive preaching such as distinguishing the church of the Bible from the Baptist or Methodist Churches. He affirms, “The function of Christian doctrine is practical to build a community which images God” (*The Bridge*, Evertt Huffard, ed., July 2000, 41:5, p.1). Since Jesus Christ taught that a tree is known by its fruit (Matt. 7:15-20), observe that the professor has built a Community Church called the Cordova Community Church in a suburb of Memphis. And, depending to whom he is speaking or with whom he is associated he may reference it as either “Cordova Community Church” or “Cordova Community Church, a church of Christ.” (Two *Commercial Appeal* articles on his church reference it in a similar manner. The earlier reference mentions “loosely affiliated with the churches of Christ;” a later article does not even mention the church of Christ.”

An online syllabus for the professor’s class on “Systematic Christian Doctrine” shows that Harding University promotes the Community Church in its classrooms. A requirement for the course is a “theological application paper” which Hicks describes as “an exercise in deliberative reflection on ministry in the light of theological principles. For example, what is the theological rationale (or function) for implementing a small group ministry in your congregation? ...Or, what is the theological rationale for a specific worship activity (worship team, drama, amount of time given to preaching)?” (<http://www.hugsr.edu/540a.htm>, p. 4). Small group ministry, worship teams, and drama are all building blocks for the Community Church (See: *The Spiritual Sword*, Alan E. Highers, ed., Oct. 2000, 32:1). Further,

the syllabus says, “The value that you discuss and apply must be rooted in something that pertains to this class” (ibid.). Imagine trying to get a passing grade out of this professor. You either agree with his restructuring of the church into a Community Church or you participate in a “polemical exchange” with him which he has stated opposes Christian doctrine. In order to graduate from HUGSR with a master of divinity degree with a concentration in doctrine this course must be taken (See the catalogue for 1999-2000).

The professor cast his lot with Rubel Shelly and the Woodmont Hills Family of God in Nashville by placing his membership there in September of this year (See: *Lovelines*, the church bulletin for Woodmont Hills for September). The full meaning of his chiding of distinctive preaching which was mentioned earlier is realized by recalling the union of Woodmont Hills with the Billy Graham Crusade held in June in Nashville.

In 1991, Randy Mayeux left the church of Christ and September 12, 1992, started the Hope Community Church in Dallas, Texas. The web site says, “The church was founded by our current pastor, Randy Mayeux, and his wife, Jeannie. After more than twenty years of ministry in the Church of Christ, Mayeux resigned his pastorship at Preston Road Church of Christ and opened this church to present meaningful life-related truths of the Christian faith to all people.” How the presidents and boards of directors for two Christian schools that claim to be more than “loosely affiliated with the churches of Christ” can continue to enable Hicks to promote, build, and proclaim Community Churches is a matter a discerning brotherhood should address. Mayeux left the church of Christ; Hicks remains “affiliated” as it suits his purposes. Not only will men preparing to preach continue to be influenced by Hicks, but now that he is at Lipscomb young boys and girls right out of high school and newly away from the security of the family environment will receive instruction from him. What a betrayal of the spiritual leadership of the home to send beloved youths off to be drawn far and away from the sacred serenity of the Savior’s side. What a sadness. What a shame.

Clearly, mixed signals and contradictions characterize Hicks’ colleagues at HUGSR such as may be illustrated by an article written by Dave Bland which claims, “Listeners and preachers alike are called on to remain committed to Scripture, allowing Scripture to set the agenda for what is heard and preached” (*The Bridge*, Evertt Huffard, ed., May 2000, 41:3, p. 1). Here Bland contradicts Hicks. Yet, later in the same article he opened the door for the direct operation of the Holy Spirit when he said, “Both commitment and sensitivity require a life of study, devotion to prayer, and openness to the work of God’s Spirit in our lives”

(ibid.). Can not those who believe the Bible to be the sole source of spiritual enlightenment today see the need to cease to support men and institutions who cannot clearly state the sameness of that conviction?

The need to put into practice the precept of Paul stated at the outset is plain: “Charge some that they teach no other doctrine.” The doctrine is God’s doctrine (Titus 2:10), Christ’s doctrine (II John 9), the apostles’ doctrine (Acts 2:42), good doctrine (I Tim. 4:6), the doctrine which is according to godliness (I Tim. 6:3), and sound doctrine (I Tim. 1:10; II Tim. 4:3; Titus 1:9, 2:1). Those who truly love God will “teach no other doctrine.”