

The Goal Of Change Agents

Gary McDade

Before passing on from the news of Bailey Station Church of Christ becoming a denominational church now known as Grace Crossing Church, how this can happen may provide an insightful precautionary warning for others who wish to remain churches patterned after the ancient order of the New Testament. “The goal of change agents” is clear: to change the church of Christ into a denominational church. This is one fact incontrovertibly established by the developments leading up to the new Grace Crossing Church. The preacher for the White Station Church of Christ was Jim Howard who took note in his church bulletin of White Station’s partnership with the newly established Southeast Church by Richard Youngblood about fifteen years ago. Although the faithful Collierville Church of Christ had been long established in that suburb of Memphis, Howard wrote in praise of Youngblood that at last a “beachhead for truth” had emerged in Collierville. The eldership of the Collierville Church of Christ voiced their objections to Howard’s disrespect of their faithful labors. *The Commercial Appeal* tells of the birth that conception has now produced in the form of Grace Crossing Church (April 13, 2006, B12; April 15, 2006, B6). In overview, the Southeast Church begun about fifteen years ago changed its name to Bailey Station Church and now to Grace Crossing Church.

In August of last year, change agents urged local preachers to join hands with denominations in publicly signing a Community Marriage Policy. Again, White Station Church of Christ emerged as a congregation wishing to lead this charge into denominationalism. Those who signed the letter about their “community-wide effort” were from White Station, their preacher Rodney Plunket and Steve Holt with “Hope Works,” from Highland Street Church of Christ, their preachers Harold Shank and Chris Altrock; three from Agape Child and Family Services who signed were David Jordan, Linda Oxford, and Willie Holcomb. Why would any faithful congregation continue financial and personal support of Agape and Hope Works when the leadership is taking the lead in pulling churches of Christ into denominational alliances and entanglements? In response, since Harold Shank sent the letters out urging denominational cooperation, a letter of request for a public discussion of propositions relating to this issue was mailed to him and printed in *The Good News From Getwell*, being the church bulletin from Getwell. Proposition 1 was “The Bible is all-sufficient in matters of faith and practice.” Affirmed: Gary McDade; Denied: Harold Shank. Proposition 2 was “The creation of contemporary creeds like the Community Marriage Policy is essential to furnish the church with

concrete tools to practice marriage as God would have it today.” Affirmed: Harold Shank; Denied: Gary McDade.

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In the letter to Shank I wrote: “I will continue making your letter to me and this response from me available to the public and to the brotherhood as I am confident a discerning brotherhood can see the propositions denied and affirmed respectfully by you reflect your heartfelt convictions as demonstrated by your participation in the signing of the CMP and your solicitation of others in churches of Christ to do the same.” Shank never responded. The change agent’s goal is not a search for truth and a defense of the same but to take churches of Christ into denominationalism.

Evertt Huffard, an elder at White Station Church of Christ and dean of HUGSR, spoke on the lectureship at Oklahoma Christian University in March and urged a future where strong churches will reclaim a greater and clearer mission in their own community working with other churches in our community and not just churches of Christ. He preached that churches of Christ must “overcome their sectarian weakness” and express a broader sense of cooperation. He stated, “When we recognize that Christendom [denominationalism] is no more, we will start sticking together.” He then urged missionaries to interact with Baptists and Nazarenes and others as he himself had done while on the mission field. He called for “cooperation and alliance” with denominationalism. The largest denomination in the United States is the Baptists (16 million adherents). Methodists, Presbyterians, Lutherans, and others are still in virtually every community, yet Huffard suggests, “When we recognize that Christendom [denominationalism] is no more, we will start sticking together.” Very good at “double-talk,” he suggests on the one hand that denominationalism “is no more” and on the other that cooperation and alliances with denominations must be made! The change agent’s goal is not taking the unifying gospel of Christ to the world but taking churches of Christ into denominationalism.

It is of interest that change agents want to change the churches of Christ and speak and write *ad nauseum* about the church needing to be relevant today by using seemingly every denominational contrivance known to man but have no desire to see denominations change one particle! The Highland Street Church of Christ website still contains an article where Harold Shank teaches that baptism is necessary (as of April 26, 2006), but the denominations do not teach this or agree

with it. The only reasonable explanation regarding why change agents do not seek to urge denominations to comply with New Testament teaching on fundamental subjects clearly revealed is because that is not their goal, objective, or desire. The goal of the change agents is to change the churches of Christ into a denomination, and they seem to have little interest in anything else.