

Recognizing Plurality of Faiths

As a minister, I get a great variety of mail. There are of course the usual requests for contributions. This is to be expected due to the nature of the work of a minister of religion. However, lately an increasing flow of mail has been coming in which seeks my signature to support the immediate withdrawal of American troops and other issues of political and sociological nature. These types of requests disturb me as I am asked to use the office of minister of the gospel to take sides in politics.

The pulpit of the Christian church should never be used by a minister for the voicing of his opinions on America, South Africa or Quebec, etc. It is a mistake to think that political involvement as an institutional church makes the church of Christ more relevant. The pulpit should be used to expound the Word of God and to proclaim the message of salvation. Also, the Lordship of Christ over all of life should be stressed. A church which has ceased "to seek those things which are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God" will eventually be absorbed by the world. The good news of the gospel is – not how deeply we can get involved in social welfare as a church body, but – Jesus Christ has come as the Redeemer of the world.

Yet, we must be involved in this world as Christians. For the Christian who accepts Christ as King, his faith does not apply merely to the Sunday worship services, but to every day of the week and to everything he does. In church, he hears the gospel proclaimed from the pulpit and during the week he submits himself to Christ's kingship. A personal Scriptural witness is given regarding the difficulties society is facing. A Christian individual will promote a Christian approach to labour, pointing out that the Christian can never be satisfied with the class struggle approach of the labour unions in seeking higher wages. A Christian for whom "all of life is religion" will try to promote a Christian approach to politics. When a Christian works with a Scriptural based approach – he does get involved! Though, he should always keep in mind that on the one hand he – must subdue the earth for Jesus Christ, Creator and King, and, on the other hand, that he is a pilgrim and sojourner on the way to the new Jerusalem. Let us not forget the admonition of the apostle Paul "Set your affection on things above, not on the things on the earth." (Colossians 3:2).

"Our wrestling, our contesting, is not against any physical enemy: it is against organizations and powers that are spiritual. We are up against the unseen power that controls this dark world, and spiritual agents from the headquarters of evil." (Ephesians 6:12)

A Christian is involved in a wrestling of spirits. In faith we accept the fact that a battle is going on for the control of this world. Each Biblically orientated Christian ought to be aware of the dangers which the spirit of our age presents. The most fundamental battle of our time is not so much whether or not the evangelical church institute or theological system will survive. The struggle goes much deeper. It is a struggle for the religious direction of human society in its totality. This is the key factor we have to face. Which

spirit is going to direct our society? Will it be humanism and secularism or Biblical Christianity?

Christians are now facing a society that is guided by a false spirit. The Christian faith has been pushed back into the home and out of every day living. There is no longer an equal opportunity for Christian parents to send their children to a school where education is Christ centered. Parents who do send their children to such a school are financially penalized for their convictions through double taxation. It has become extremely difficult to have a labour union such as the Christian Labour Association of Canada which seeks Biblical answers for the problems of labour.

The Christian faith is not just for home and church. It ought to direct the course of all of life, of each living situation. If the Christian faith does not give direction something else will.

We must always remember that each person is a believer. Each man is committed to a particular view of life. "Faith" in the Biblical sense is more than giving your life to Jesus Christ. It is more than saying "I am saved." Faith is a heart commitment to live here and now by the light of the Word of God. "Faith" according to the Bible is obedience and a willing listening to the Word of God which result in acts of faith that relate to our time and situation. This involves a probing or testing of the spirits that are in the movements of our time. Such Biblical faith, which includes obedience, is the victory that overcomes the world. In this way, unbelief does not mean to live a life without religion. There is no such person called "Unbeliever." Unbelief is to have one's life misdirected by a false belief, by the "Lie." With this in mind, we can see the reason for Christians desiring Christ centered education for their children, a labour association which has the Bible as its basic foundation. The Christian faith is not just a road to heaven, but also a way of life. Therefore, the Christian faith can never be limited to a private sphere." In this light Paul's words in Ephesians 6:12 become very meaningful. This view of Christianity lays claim to every part of life. This view makes Christians contest the spirits they encounter.

I am not advocating a Christian society. This cannot be as the majority of the people in our nation are not Christian believers. I propose that we should have a society where the plurality of faiths is recognized. As a Christian, I would like to have the opportunity to give my children a Christ centered education without being financially penalized for doing so. I would like to be able to approach the problems of our society through organizations which base their beliefs on the Bible. Christians do not want to force their views on people who do not agree with them. However, we do not want the views of others forced upon us, as it is being done today in our society.

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