



Oct. 29, 2006 (Vol. 6)

## ANTI, LIBERAL or SIMPLY A CHRISTIAN? (1)

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In all ages those who introduce error deny responsibility for the division that follows their conduct. Adam denied his responsibility, Eve denied hers... but God held them all accountable for their own actions (Gen. 3).

In more recent history, those who promoted musical instruments in worship did not accept the blame for the trouble that arose. Rather, they made every effort to shift the blame for division to those who **opposed** musical instruments in worship. Add to this the missionary societies, the orphan's homes, the sponsoring church arrangement, the social gospel, etc. Every generation that **opposed** innovations was described as **against** music, **against** evangelism, **against** children, **against** cooperation, etc. Eventually, someone got the bright idea to lump all these contentious, erroneous, troublesome "brethren" into one ugly category. These terrible, ghastly people are even now called "Anti".

"Anti" simple means against. Let me ask you this, are you **for** sin? Are you **for** innovation? Are you **for** changing the God authorized pattern for worship? Are you **for** changing the God authorized organization of the church? Are you **for** changing the God authorized work of the church? If you are not for all the above, you better watch out... someone might consider you an "anti".

Of course, labels are easy to use. And in reality they have a place - if they are used with understanding and comprehension. But many times people take labels and do not comprehend them. Take the label "Pharisee" for example. I cannot tell you how many people have told me that a "Pharisee" was a "legalist" - a strict law keeper. This point is used as if "keeping law strictly" is what Jesus condemned in the Pharisees. But a careful reading of your Bible will clarify that Jesus NEVER once condemned the Pharisees for obeying GOD'S law. He did condemn them for strict adherence to MAN'S doctrines (Matt. 15:1-9) and condemned them for NOT keeping GOD'S law completely (Matt. 23:23). So, if we use labels accurately - they can be useful.

But all too often, people use labels simply as a disparagement, a nice easy category to lump "those guys" into - regardless of the accuracy of the label.

The same can be said of the term "liberal". It can be used disparagingly, as an easy place to lump all those we disagree with. Some do have the idea that "If they don't think like I do, they are 'liberal'." Now don't get me wrong, I use the term liberal to describe some brethren. **I do so because they loose where God has not loosed.** I do not describe them this way as an insult, but rather as a description of their practices & attitudes toward authority. But even those who we describe as liberals will describe some they know as "liberal". Of course, the problem with all this is that when people look more at labels, than what the labels describe - we begin to lose track of what God actually says on the matter.

Now I must say, to the credit of some I consider liberal - that some "on that side of the fence" do still attempt to justify their practices with scripture. More often than not, there is simply the closed door, the closed mind & the closed Bible. So, when we come across "liberal" brethren who appeal to the Book - take notice. If they are honestly trying to go by God's word, I predict that they will eventually learn the Truth & depart from liberalism (Mt. 7:7; Jn. 3:19-21).

Such an idea may seem ludicrous to some. They will say, "I will NEVER be an 'Anti'! Why they are against everything that God allows!" But again, labels are not always perceived correctly. While many would call us "Anti" because of various things we are against - does that mean we oppose God? Does that mean we are actually acting contrary to Truth? To all those who consider us "Anti" - I invite you, in the Spirit of Christ, to take a closer look. Examine the appeals to the Bible we make. Test the principles of authority that we point to. See for yourself if what we say holds water or not.

Some may say, "I already know what you Antis believe. I don't need to hear anymore." But I dare say that many have NOT heard & understood what we say & why we say it. I've asked MANY brethren I consider liberal minded whether they understand the differences that divide us - and more often than not get "No" as the answer. Regrettably, when I've also ask if we could discuss the differences - the common answer is: "I am not interested, I'm busy, I'm satisfied," etc. Brethren, liberal, conservative, anti or whatever you are - is it Christ like to pass by opportunity to discuss the Bible? Aren't we supposed to seek unity based upon the scriptures? Don't we think that there might even be one sincere, but uninformed soul "over there"?

Un-Christ-like attitudes are more damaging to the cause of Christ than teaching error. False doctrine happens even from ignorance (2 Pet. 3:16), and is soul damning (3:17-18). But in honest hearts, like Apollos, when Truth is heard it will be accepted, errors will be corrected & souls will be saved (Acts 18:24-28). But if

our attitude is wrong - then correction will not come. If we have too much pride to admit our faults, if we seek to justify some practice in our life, if we "love" someone too much, or get too fond of our comfortable life and just "don't want to be disturbed" - then we will balk, stutter and hesitate at truth. We will find a convenient way to dismiss it - one that makes us feel alright. Some may say, "Oh, that was just an Anti... you know what they are like. I hear they don't like orphans, cooperation, "fellowship" halls, etc. They are just against everything..." And instead of imitating the noble Boreans (Acts 17:11), some continue on their way having only heard one side of things.

Remember the debate we had with the Missionary Baptist? I recall several here commenting on the fact that they could not believe that the man said the things he had. Now preachers have told you for years "they say x, y, z" - but now you have heard it for yourself. Now you know. Now you are stronger in your understanding & convictions, because you have heard what someone "over there" says. Now, when the preacher says, "This is what they teach" - you know it as a fact, from first hand experience. That makes a big difference.

But imagine, if you will, that you were told "They believe x, y, z" - then went and you heard them speak and you discovered they were actually speaking as the Bible speaks and being silent where the Bible is silent? What would you do? To my brethren on the "liberal" left hand - I ask only that you have the heart that God wants you to have. Be willing to examine and study. And to my brethren on the "opinionated" right hand - I ask the same. Both are extremes that do not see themselves as the extreme. Both are in error for either loosing where God has bound or binding where God has loosed. Both, sadly, are not walking in the light and will be called into account for following the doctrines and precepts of men (Mt. 15:9).

In future articles by this title, I intend to address specific issues, such as instrumental music, the missionary society, "fellowship" halls, orphan's homes as well as the errors of the "no-bible class" brethren,

the one-cup doctrine and the "located preacher" error.

I may interrupt this with other articles as we go, but Lord willing we'll be able to get to each of these points in turn. If you have specific points you would like addressed or questions, please let me know. I will definitely consider them and give scripture for the answer. If there are other issues that divide brethren that you would like to also see discussed, then please let me know that as well. As God grants opportunity, let us search the Scriptures daily to see whether these things are so (Acts 17:11).

May God richly bless each of us unto a full assurance of the faith, being established in the knowledge of the Truth, built up in wisdom & abounding always in love.

### **THINGS TO REMEMBER**

- **Men's & Ladies Classes** - Every 2nd Sun. @ 5pm.
- **Door to Door** - Every Tuesday @ 6pm.
- **Home Bible Study** - Sat., Oct. 14 & 28.
- **Business Meeting** - Sun. Oct. 29 @ 5pm.
- **GM in Knoxville** - Doug Hill, Nov. 17-19, 2006.
- **GM** - Jeff Smith, April 15-20, 2007.
- **GM** - R. McPherson, Oct.14-19, 2007.
- **GM** - TBA April 2008.
- **GM** - Lanny Smith, Oct.12-17, 2008.

### **PRAY FOR**

**Mag Bumbalough, Thelma Cunningham, Mary Cox, Monie Petty, Dave Poteet, Joshua & Misty Poteet, Rose Taylor, Dorris Williams, Robert England, Johanna Fletcher, Ed Williams, Joe Smith (cancer), Lydia Poe, Mike Tenpenny (back). Also, Sierra Frasier (arm), Reba Jones (Dorris Williams' niece), Jachie Tindle (cancer, relative of Jo Miller & the Sims), Holly Jernigan (Joyce Gardner's niece), John Ross Key (Mary Cox's son), Marci Miller (Alisa Fletcher's mother), Ocia Bell Jones (Doris William's mother), Ruth Williams (Betty England's niece), Pauline Hickey, Nanny Witaker, Dylan Roberts (grandson of Marilyn's friend).**

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