
BIBLE TALK

This week the question is a continuation of last week: ***Is the church of Christ a cult?***

Last week we noticed that the church of Christ was accused on ***CNN's Nancy Grace Program*** of being a cult. We also noticed Walter Martin's definition of a cult. Remember, Walter Martin is a world renown expert on cults. He said a cult is:

... a group of people polarized around someone's interpretation of the Bible and is characterized by major deviations from orthodox Christianity relative to the cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith.

(via *Spiritual Sword*, July 2006, p. 13)

This definition raises two questions:

- 1) **Is the church of Christ a group that is "polarized around someone's interpretation of the Bible"?**

AND
- 2) **Does the church of Christ deviate from orthodox Christianity relative to cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith?**

Last week we focused on the first point and noticed the church of Christ does not "polarize" around some man's interpretation of scripture. This week we will focus on the second point: ***Does the church of Christ deviate from orthodox Christianity relative to cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith?***

FIRST: It is our desire to conform to scripture first and foremost – not what is considered orthodox by men.

SECOND: As far as doctrines considered "*cardinal doctrines*" there is nothing we believe that is considered unorthodox. Our beliefs about:

- The Godhead
- The incarnation of Christ
- The resurrection
- Justification by grace thru faith

- The second coming
- The judgment, etc.

Though not every group considered “*orthodox*” will share our same views on all of these doctrines, at least one group considered “*orthodox*” will share our same views.

ILL: For example, the Catholic Church would not share ***our views concerning the virgin Mary***, but the Baptist Church would – and the Baptist Church is considered “*orthodox*.”

The Baptist Church would not share ***our views concerning instrumental music***, but the Greek Orthodox Church would – and the Greek Orthodox Church is considered “*orthodox*” – and their name suggests.

Yes ... *we believe there is only one church acceptable to God*, but there are “*orthodox*” churches who share that same view – the Catholic Church for one.

There are conservative scholars throughout history who have shared every single position which we believe in the church of Christ.

HIERACHAL CONTROL?

Walter Martin says a cult is distinguishable by the fact that ***its adherents are kept under strict hierarchal control***.

Unlike many denominations, the churches of Christ have no earthly headquarters. We have no hierarchal structure.

- The Catholic Church – looks to Rome.
- The Seventh Day Adventist – looks to the headquarters in Springfield, MO.
- The Southern Baptists – look to the Southern Baptist Convention (wherever it convenes).

No so with the churches of Christ. Our headquarters are in heaven:

Ephesians 1:22-23

²² And He put all things under His feet, and gave **Him to be head over all things to the church,**

²³ which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Our “head” is in heaven and our headquarters are where our “head” is at.

The NT scriptures are clear about authoritarian, hierarchal rulers (1 Pet 5:1-3; Mt 20:25-28).

CONCLUSION

The church of Christ is not a cult in the sense that it is defined by the dictionary nor by experts who deal with true cults.

The church of Christ was started, not by Alexander Campbell, but by Jesus Christ Himself and is evidenced by the fact that everything we teach and practice is found in the teachings of Christ and His apostles.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Well ... thanks for listening to our message this week. We invite you to visit our website www.WillOfTheLord.com. There you may download the notes and the audio file of the message you just listened to.

Call again next week when we consider a new subject on ***Bible Talk***.