

KINGDOM COMMUNITY – Accepting Different Theologies

It has been said, “Focus on the blood, the cross and the resurrection, because anything else is peripheral”. This statement is definitely not accurate, but it conveys a very important message – not everything that we believe is essential for Kingdom living or critical for our spiritual health. However, to most Christians this is a contentious attitude to espouse.

The reason we have so many denominations is the differences in doctrine. Apart from the divergence between Christian religion and The Kingdom, which is a critical distinction to make for our life in the Kingdom, much of what divides Christians are small things in the scheme of eternity. Tongues, baptism, dress code, a specific leader, preaching style, worship, Trinity issues, church governance, societal interaction, are all elements of the division between those who follow the teachings of Jesus. A cursory viewing of this list – except possibly for the Trinity item – shows them to be preferential items of belief, not principles which are anti-God or anti-Kingdom that really matter in the scheme of things.

There are many issues that are irrelevant for us to engage in. For example: Paul talks about fables being unproductive.

1 Timothy 1:4 (NKJV) – *nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith.*

The point he is making is that the important issue is our spiritual growth and development, which edification promotes. Like gossiping¹, debating who’s the best leader², and spending time discussing fables³, these should be ignored as they lead us away from the essentials and subtly take us down a path of ‘destruction’⁴.

Here are a few items which are irrelevant in the Kingdom life. They make no difference to the way we meet as a community under the headship of Christ, but they can cause dissension if they are the focus of what some see as important.

- Historicist interpretation of Revelation⁵
- Pre, post or Amillennialism
- The Antichrist/Antechrist
- The Parousia date
- Dual creations
- Where Hell is
- Holy days
- The biblical multiplication standard is 30, 60 & 100-fold
- Our exact eternal rewards
- Worship, praise or celebration
- Creative worship
- Baptismal training
- Marriage & burial ceremonies
- Birthday celebration
- Meeting location⁶
- Meeting styles and times
- Vegetarianism⁷

It is true that these items affect the way a person lives their lives, but differences in our understandings of them should not put a barrier in any way between us. Any barriers produce parochialism and originate in **legalism** and **religion**, having pride as their source – “I’m right and you’re wrong”. Sound familiar?

In a Kingdom Community there must be tolerance (I don’t like using that word, but it fits here) of the doctrines of other members that don’t totally align with your own. I’m not referring to doctrines of demons⁸ which lead to our destruction, just theological or preferential beliefs that we can have that are not

1 – 1 Timothy 5:13

2 – 1 Corinthians 1:11-13

3 – 1 Timothy 4:7; 2 Peter 1:16

4 – 1 Timothy 4:4

5 – www.gods-kingdom-ministries.net/teachings/ffi-newsletter/ffi-2009/07-01-2009-summary-of-the-book-of-revelation/

6 – Romans 16:5; Acts 2:46; Acts 13:5

7 – 1 Corinthians 10:25

8 – 1 Timothy 4:1

unrighteous and which don't really matter in the Kingdom scheme of things.

It's interesting that quite a bit of what Christians label as sound doctrine fits into the category of, "It must agree with scripture", rather than what Paul would call sound doctrine. If one person differs from another in the interpretation of a scripture passage, legalism labels the other person as believing false doctrine. Hence, the divisions in Christendom over doctrine.

It is important that sound doctrine is be taught in community⁹. Sound doctrine should be acted on by the hearers. Sound doctrine is identified as that which edifies the hearer – it encourages them and helps them grow spiritually, bringing them to maturity as Kingdom sons.¹⁰

There are some things that are contrary to sound doctrine¹¹:

- lawlessness
- insubordination
- ungodliness
- sinfulness
- unholiness
- profanity
- murder
- fornication
- sodomy
- kidnapping
- lying
- perjury

to name a few. These should not be advocated, but spoken against within community¹².

Now hear this! ***All of us believe some false doctrines*** because we've been taught by men and not by Holy Spirit. Theology and bible interpretation is a Greek-based system of bringing mental understanding (cognitive understanding) out of spiritual media. Only the Spirit of Truth can reveal the truth in the scriptures, as well as all the spiritual truths that are not contained in scripture.¹³ That being said, it's better to have some understanding than to go around blind – hence the need for community teachers. Even so, it's even better to know nothing and be led by the Spirit and have him teach you everything. You can't make any mistakes that way¹⁴ – provided that you hear properly with your spirit.

So, in our community we must put aside any differences in theology and stick to what is edifying and that which builds strong community while avoiding deleterious error. This is a big ask for those who've come out of the evangelical, charismatic or pentecostal systems where Greek-based theology is highly prized. We must put a great deal of effort into being in harmony and unity so that we can allow the Spirit to release a spirit of community in us so that we are of one heart and one mind.

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9 – Titus 2:1

10 – 'Edification': <oikodome> Denotes "the act of building"; Used only figuratively in the NT, in the sense of edification, i.e. the promotion of spiritual growth; literally "the things of building up". (Vine's expository Dictionary of Biblical Words) www.menfak.no/bibel/vines.html

11 – 1 Timothy 1:10

12 – Titus 1:9

13 – John 16:13

14 – 1 John 4:6