

How to Disagree in the Kingdom

(Based on an article by Jonathan Welton with the same title)¹

There are 3 cultures inside the Church (Christian sub-cultures): Theologians (academics); High church (Anglicans, Roman Catholics, Orthodox, etc.); and Popular Christianity (pop-culture). Popular Christianity is the culture of many Christians. When it comes to theology and the Bible, Popular Christianity takes a very rigid view of truth. Opposed to this view, High Church is more interested in Clerical leader's instructions and theologians in their understanding of the Bible from an academic perspective.

The reason this topic starts from describing sub-cultures within Christianity is to highlight academic theologians ability to disagree with respect. That's very, very different to Popular Christianity among the Evangelicals, Charismatics and Pentecostals.

Jonathan Welton made this point quite clear in his 2016 article:

“The popular Christian culture does not handle disagreement well. When leaders disagree, they tend to treat each other with a high level of disrespect, using labels like heretic, false teacher, blasphemer, or even antichrist. Generally such leaders are not willing to calmly and openly discuss their differences but instead make defamatory statements and point fingers. They fear their followers will be captivated by some evil teaching, so they actively try to persuade those under their influence against said evil doctrine. As a result, they influence their followers to also have disrespect toward a given person or movement. In other words, this disrespect has a filter-down system to everyone under a leader's influence.

By contrast, academic Christianity has a strong appreciation for debate and discussion of ideas without disrespect. This is important for all who want to study theology, because we need to be able to examine the ways other people believe and disagree with some of them while still respecting them as people and fellow Christians. Academics value standing on their own opinion, based on their own study, so they say, “I believe such-and-such for this reason”. This is simply a personal statement and does not have a negative influence. Academic Christianity is okay with disagreement and does not see it as a hindrance to respect. It is okay for people to hold differing views and remain friends.”²

We need to learn how to disagree without disrespecting those with a different view to our own. We also need to stop exaggerating any negative statements we make about those who disagree when we are counselling others not to take on teachings we believe are 'wrong'. We should have the goal to be understanding of differing belief, so we are clear about what we believe and are fair with our assessment of those who disagree.

For myself, I've had to change my beliefs as Father deprogrammed me of what I believed (from church teaching) and then reprogrammed me with his Kingdom knowledge. I've even had to apologise to others when I've had wrong attitudes towards them.

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25-3-2016

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(Readers will need to look up for themselves any scriptures alluded to in this document)

1 – The article is no longer available free on the internet (February 2023)

2 – “How To Disagree In The Kingdom” Welton Academy (25-3-2016)