

# THE LEXIA EDIFIER

**ROMANS 14:19 ....Let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another.**

**DECEMBER 16, 2012**

## **Slouching to Condemnation**

**Jim Stauffer**

When Robert Bork wrote his book, *Slouching toward Gomorrah*, he lamented the lack of conviction and will demonstrated by Americans and their leaders.

We must begin this discussion by reminding ourselves of the picture of slouching. Our mothers would say, "stand up straight, quit slouching." They, of course were referring to our posture.

The dictionary defines the verb slouch this way; *To have a downcast or drooping gait, look or posture.* As Bork used it, a lowering of the standards of a society. The accommodating attitude of liberalism is the door opener for any slouching of our standards whether political, moral or spiritual. The first chapter of Romans describes the slouching of man as idolatry. Even though man had ample evidence of the God in heaven, he traded that knowledge, became a fool, and worshipped the creature rather than the Creator. **(Rom. 1:21-25)** Because of this unrighteousness, the wrath of God will come against those who do such. **(Rom. 1:18)** Because of the influence of the world around them they lowered their

standards and became idolaters. With these new standards they exchanged an eternal friendship with God for a temporal friendship with those here on earth.

Liberalism, the acceptance of all ideas as equal, leads mankind in every station of life to compromise, lower or slouch his standards. We have witnessed this today in the church. Christians, more than ever allow the accepted mores of the world to permeate their thinking. Modern movies and television shows take for granted immorality that would not have been tolerated several years ago. As brethren do this they are lowering their standards. They are slouching regarding the biblical principles of morality and spirituality. As a result we see much more activity in the church that resembles the world. Immodest dress is much more common among our brethren. Divorce happens at a rate far in excess of 30 years ago. How do we explain this any other way than our standards have been lowered?

We have brethren wanting to compromise with the evolutionists and denominationalists all because liberalism has invaded our hearts. Because of it all ideas have merit and should

be tolerated. John describes this as loving the world and he says the world's ideas are not equal to God's. **1 John 2:15** *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vainglory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. 17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.* Isn't this the very thing that happened to Demas? **2 Tim. 4:10** *for Demas forsook me, having loved this present world, and went to Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia.*

Churches throughout the country have adopted liberalism into their thinking. The simplicity of God's plan for each Christian to teach the word to his neighbor and each congregation to stand in its community as the pillar and ground of the truth is no longer sufficient. These congregations begin to use the ideas of men to increase the efficiency of the mission of the church. Before we go any farther, focus on the pure stupidity or rebelliousness of man trying to improve on God's plan. Anyone remember Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron?

Some of the digressions from God's word have occurred when we confuse the role of the individual and the church.

The role of the local church regarding benevolence is to care for the needy saints. **(Acts 4:32-37; 11:27-30; 1 Cor. 16:1,2; 2 Cor. 9:1,2)** It is not nor has it ever been incumbent upon the local church to tend to the material needs of the world. That would fall into the area of individual responsibility. **(Gal. 6:10)**

In this regard many churches began to support orphan homes from the treasury of the local church. It changes the role of the church which is to care for the needy saints and places the responsibility upon it for the needs of society. This is not according to God's design as He revealed in Scripture.

Soon they began to treat education the same way. They support so called "Christian

Colleges" from the church treasury. This is an effort to educate children of the membership as well as those of the world in both secular and biblical fields. The only problem with this is God did not design it that way. The church has the responsibility itself to edify its own saints. **(Eph. 4:11,12)** Secular education is not the responsibility of the local church and biblical education of the saints is the role of the pastors, teachers and evangelists of the local church, not a separate organization such as a college.

But it has not stopped there. The next liberal idea was to have several churches pool their resources under one supervisory board who would then, hire and dispense preachers to missionary fields, local congregations, etc. Here, of course, a board is overseeing the work of several local churches rather than the overseers of the local church. **(1 Pet. 5:1,2)** This eventually grew into nationwide radio, T.V. and Campus Ministries. What is wrong with all this? It perverts the local church and its work by attempting to organize the universal church. The Bible is silent about any organized effort of churches world wide. It teaches the local church to evangelize its community as the pillar and ground of the truth, edify its own saints and to care for the needy saints where possible.

What has happened to our brethren and as a result many churches throughout the country is liberal thinking that allows an equality of the ideas of man and God.

Peter said it best when he told the high priest, "We must obey God rather than men." **(Acts 5:29)**

The above examples of liberal thinking are not new to brethren. Rather they should serve as reminders of what can happen when we allow the world to influence our thinking. **2 John 9** *Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son.*

## INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN WORSHIP

The Community church of Christ in Hendersonville, Tennessee began using it on special occasions -- via a CD recording. The Norway Avenue congregation in Huntingdon, West Virginia first started using praise teams to "capture the attention and imagination of young people" but has now moved to the use of instruments in order to "adapt appropriately to culture." The Max Lacado-led Oak Hills church in San Antonio refrains from the use of instruments on Sunday morning because of "the absence of instruments in New Testament churches," said Vic King, church minister of missions. Oak Hills, however, uses instruments on Sunday nights and other occasions.

These three congregations are indicative of a trend among progressive churches catering to cultural demands. It is not limited to these three or only to those seeking membership in trendy groups. I would encourage every gospel preacher to re-study this important question and address the subject with seriousness and resolve. It is not going to disappear but will become an issue that will disturb and divide brethren all over again. Could it be that we see a generation bearing the fruit of weak convictions because of a failure to sow the truth on this important subject?

The Key Issue: -- Have you tried to buy a gift for someone but had no idea what to purchase? You have two options: 1) you can pick something you like (no guarantee they will like it) or, 2) you can seek the advice of others with insight into the expressed will of the recipient. There is a big difference in the two approaches. We either buy what we want or we buy what they want. The same principle works when we offer gifts of praise to God. What is it that God wants? After having read much of the current lines of argumentation justifying the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship, it is apparent to me that it comes down to the age-old issue of selfishness. As one person said, "I want it

because I like it." The me-first generation has spoken.

Six Essential Scriptures: -- **1 Cor. 2:9-13.** It is impossible for you to know the mind of God unless it has been revealed. All of which means we must dispense with the "I think..." and focus on what the Author has expressed.

**Eph. 3:1-4.** God spoke, the apostles wrote, and we can read and understand. All of which means: if the apostles didn't write it and we can't read it, God doesn't want it. That's true whether you are discussing infant baptism or instrumental music.

**1 Cor. 14:15.** Written in the context of a worship assembly, Paul addresses two important parts of man's worship: praying and singing.

**Eph. 5:17-19.** Paul addresses the WHO: "speaking to one another" -- everyone is involved, the WHAT "psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs" -- not popular and pop songs, and the WHERE: "singing and making melody with your heart" -- the melody making instrument is specified.

**Col. 3:16** We are to lift up our voices and sing with thankfulness

**Heb. 13:15.** God tells us what He wants -- "the sacrifice of praise...the fruit of lips that give thanks.

How anyone can read these verses and conclude that music in the early church was anything other than congregational and vocal is beyond my understanding. Did Paul make a mistake by not saying we should play with the understanding? Or did he accurately convey what God wanted?

The Principle Of Silence: -- I believe religiously minded people understand the principle of silence -- when they want to. If I propose to a nearby Christian Church that they add fish to the Lord's Supper because 1) the fish symbol reminds people of Jesus, 2) there is nothing inherently wrong with fish, and 3) the Bible doesn't specifically prohibit it, the arguments they would make against adding fish would be the same arguments I would

make against adding play to sing. It is not any different. If you can "add" play to sing, I can "add" fish to the Lord's Supper.

Those who argue in favor of its use via Old Testament teaching display a Sadducean misunderstanding of Scripture (**Matt. 22:29**). By what authority (not to speak of logic) does one choose flutes and harps (electric guitars and drums?) to the neglect of animal sacrifices and incense burning? Who gives you the right to pick and choose--unless.... it really is all about me.

There is no instrument like the human voice. When saints gather and sing, as they ought, it produces a sound unequaled by any symphony. Shall we bring forth a mechanical reproduction or the real thing that God desires to hear? Will we worship as we will or as He wills?

*by Wilson Adams*

**Psalms 1: 1** Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scoffers; **2** But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. **3** And he shall be like a tree planted by streams of water, that bringeth forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also doth not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. **4** The wicked are not so, but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. **5** Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. **6** For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; but the way of the wicked shall perish.

**News and Notes:** We thank God for the recovery of **Irene Hurd** and continue in prayer for **Terry Czirr, Mary Czirr** and **Jan Patrick**.

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We recommend to you the following websites:

***facebook.comlenexachurchofchrist/  
thelenexaedifier.com  
lenexachurchofchrist.org***

**Our Meeting times are:**

Sunday Bible Classes: 9:30 AM

Worship Services: 10:20 AM & 5:00 PM

Wednesday Bible Classes: 7:00 PM

The Church at Lenexa is a congregation of brethren who have been "justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." (**Romans 3:24**)

As a result of this justification we have been "delivered out of darkness and translated into the kingdom of the Son of his love, in whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of sins." (**Colossians 1:13,14**)

We therefore respect the inspired word of God that will completely furnish us unto every good work by speaking only as the oracles of God. (**2 Timothy 3:16,17; 1 Peter 4:11**)

**What must one do to be saved?**

- ✓ **Hear** the gospel - Romans 10:17
- ✓ **Believe** in Christ - Heb. 11:6
- ✓ **Repent** of sin - Acts 17:30
- ✓ **Confess** Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10
- ✓ **Be baptized** for the remission of sins - Acts 2:38