

What Others Think Of Us

by Bill Crews

Many members of the various denominations of “Christendom” **disapprove** of the churches of Christ, not so much because of what we believe and practice as because of what we do not believe and practice. **We fall into disfavor:**

Not so much because we practice immersion for baptism, but because we do not believe that sprinkling and pouring are baptism and do not recognize them as such.

Not so much because we honor the New Testament as a perfect and sufficient guide, but because we do not have a human creed by which to govern ourselves, and because we oppose human creeds, confessionals, disciplines, articles of faith or catechisms.

Not so much because we believe in and practice congregational independence, but because we do not believe in or have an earthly headquarters, a central governing body, associations and conventions.

Not so much because we believe in and endeavor to practice the all-sufficiency of the local congregation, but because we do not believe in or have other organizations, inter– and intra–congregational and because we do not support human organizations, however worthy.

Not so much because we believe the mission of the local congregation is to preach the gospel, edify its members and provide for its needy members, but because we do not believe in church-provided recreational, social, civic and political endeavors, and church benevolence for the world.

Not so much because we believe in and practice supporting the work of the congregation by the members giving as they have been prospered each first day of the week, but because we do not believe in or have church bazaars, pie or cookie sales, raffles, bingo games, plays or meals to raise money for any church work.

Not so much because we refer to preachers of the gospel as preachers, evangelists or ministers of the gospel, but because we do not believe in and oppose referring to them as “the pastor” or address them with such titles as “Father” or “reverend.”

Not so much because we believe in and have congregational singing in our worship assemblies, but because we do not believe in or have choirs or the use of mechanical instruments of music in our worship assemblies.

Not so much because we emphasize each Lord’s day (Sunday, the first day of the week) and observe the Lord’s supper weekly on that day, but because we do not endorse daily, monthly, quarterly or yearly observances of the Lord’s supper, and because we do not celebrate “Christmas” or “Easter,” celebrations mentioned nowhere in the New Testament. One cannot consistently and with any degree of conviction believe and practice the truth without disbelieving and rejecting all that is unauthorized by or contrary to the truth of the gospel of the New Testament.

We are unpopular, then, not so much for teaching and upholding the truth as for condemning that which is not in harmony with the truth. But how can we contend **for** the truth (**Jude 3**) without contending **against** that which is unauthorized by or contrary to the truth? (**Galatians 1:6-9; 2 Timothy 3:16-4:4**). How can we uphold that which the truth authorizes without opposing that which the truth does not authorize? God’s truth is absolute, perfect, sufficient and plain. Scripture has been given for reproof and correction as well as for teaching and instruction. In preaching the word one must reprove and rebuke, as well as exhort (read the Scriptures above in this paragraph).

Jesus was rejected by His own (**John 1:11**),...

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