

How Come this “Cambellite” Stuff We Keep Hearing?

Nothing we believe or do is believed or done by the authority of Campbell or any other human. We follow the authority of Christ.

By James Boyd

Most brethren have been called “Campbellites” by denominational people at one time or another. They are led to do this by a prejudiced clergy who just abhor the simple plea to return to New “Testament Christianity.” They are so wrapped up in denominationalism and their churches of human origin, they just can’t conceive of anybody not belonging to a denomination. They just won’t allow it. They would prohibit anybody from being just a Christian and a member of the church of which you read in the New Testament. Neither will they be honest with the historical facts regarding Alexander Campbell and the efforts made by many to restore the church as the Bible reveals it. It is just too much for them.

The fact is, efforts to return to the church of the Bible began before Alexander Campbell ever set foot on these shores. It began among Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, and others without ever having heard of the man. Churches of Christ existed in England after Catholicism and the Protestant Reformation and a century or more

before Alexander Campbell was born. How could such folks be called Campbellites with any degree of honesty? Dishonesty may be at the heart of the term “Campbellite.”

Even in the county where I live, there existed a church of Christ before Alexander Campbell was ever in America. Only a prejudiced clergymen who shows his ignorance of history and the Bible would ever say Campbell, or any man founded the church of Christ. Why don’t some of these people show more honesty with truth and admit the church exists separate and apart from denominationalism? Nothing we believe or do is believed or done by the authority of Campbell or any other human. We follow the authority of Christ **(Col. 3:17)**.

Unfortunately, some, even among brethren who have chosen liberalism over truth, have given away the plea to restore New Testament Christianity. They openly confess they have no interest in its restoration. Here is one of a number of places where we part company. I am interested in the church of the Bible because, of all the churches that exist on earth, that ONE is RIGHT.



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Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. **(Matthew 5:16)**

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The Traditional Party Line

By Warren E. Berkley



Thoughts To Ponder

When people do succeed in breaking free from belief in God, they simply create another religious belief to replace it. We always assimilate religion or God to a specific image, to specific rites or groups, to a specific conception, and when we banish these, ... we think we have achieved freedom of thought. But we then proceed to an apotheosis of reason or science and we have new Gods.

Years ago, a man from a neighboring church came to the city where I was located, walked into my office and immediately said, "OK, what is your position on the marriage question?" I said, "...whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery." His response? "Yeah, the traditional party line!"

I said, "Wait a minute. All I did was quote **Matthew 19:9**; I've just repeated the words of Christ!" He said, "Well, but is that all the truth?" Almost as he said that, he heard what he had said! "I mean ... I mean, I know Jesus taught the truth ..." His words had already betrayed him. Rather than submit to the clear teaching of Jesus he had chosen to hurl an accusation that impugned my beliefs. But what did he mean by the phrase "traditional party line?" Behind this charge may be at least one of four attitudes:

1. I don't like what you teach, I

"Personally, I don't give two hoots about traditional or nontraditional in the whole thing, and would like to make an appeal to anyone who might be feeling the pressure of the nontraditional use of the word traditional these days. Don't be too quick to apologize for preaching and teaching that which has characteristically been taught, for there is at least an outside chance that the reason that bit of teaching is traditional is because it is so."

won't accept it so I'll distract you from discussing the Bible by making this charge. This was certainly the case with the man above. If I spent time defending myself and why I believed what I believed that was time not spent discussing what **Matthew 19:9** means. Clever tactic, yes? If I have close friends or relatives who want to marry, naturally I don't like to hear someone teach something that would question that union. And without any doubt, if I am contemplating a relationship, and you tell me I shouldn't, I won't like that. But in-

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Larry Rouse
Editor

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stead of just saying, "I don't like what you are teaching," it is much easier (and sometimes more effective) to charge "Well, you are just repeating the traditional party line."

2. There are many others who have taught this for many years. So what? The fact that a teaching has been held for years does not necessarily prove it is wrong. Being traditional is not always bad. 2 Thessalonians urges us to hold the traditions of the apostles. There are thousands of brethren who have taught the necessity of repentance and baptism for many generations. This says nothing about the validity of repentance and baptism. The number of preachers and/or writers who have taught a proposition does not minimize its validity, or prove it. Likewise, the number of years something has been taught neither diminishes its truthfulness, nor makes it true.

3. You haven't really studied, and you don't really have your own convictions; you have blindly accepted the word of others. I would guess this is what is behind the "traditional party line" charge most of time. The charge then is a way of saying that I can read your heart and know your motives. It also says that I know that you are not sincere, nor a truth seeker. The only person qualified to make such a charge is the one who is able not only to know what we teach, but why we teach it. If you are able to know (have real evidence) that someone has put himself under the dominion of others; if you are certain that a man prefers "popular brotherhood thought" (whatever that is) to personal Bible study, then perhaps you are equipped to make this charge.

4. I don't have any real arguments or response to what you are teaching. Here is the real problem the man described above had. He had nothing to say in response to

Matthew 19:9, knew what he was doing was wrong, but wanted to do it anyway. So, he threw charges around to try to save face. When I tell people my belief that the only man (with a living mate) free to remarry is the one who has put away his spouse for fornication I want them show me the error of my position (if it is error). Don't make mindless charges - come to the scriptures and teach me the truth. Help me to see where I've been deceived or made a mistake in my study. Lead me through the passages that pertain to this. Give me something substantial instead of just charging me as a slave to human opinion or party pressure. Often, though, when a disputant makes the charge of "traditional party line," he is reacting in frustration over his or her lack of substantial biblical arguments.

I am not prepared to ignore a real danger here. There is a temptation to preach what others are preaching; there is the sin of listening to men and ignoring God; and there is such a thing as a Pharisaic, party-spirit mentality. But when you teach what the Lord said in **Matthew 19:9**, or anywhere else, because you believe in the Lord and want to stand where He stands, don't be intimidated by the charge of submitting to the "party line." And the fact that 95% of the preachers you know and respect teach the same thing is never a reason to throw it out. What do you think?

My good friend Harold Turner wrote about this a few years ago in a journal. His conclusion fits well here: "Personally, I don't give two hoots about traditional or nontraditional in the whole thing, and would like to make an appeal to anyone who might be feeling the pressure of the nontraditional use of the word traditional these days. Don't be too quick to apologize for preaching and teaching that which has characteristically been taught, for there is at least an outside chance that the reason that bit of teaching is traditional is because it is so."



When God Thinks of the church of Christ...

By Garner Hall

* When God thinks of the church of Christ, He thinks of saved individuals (**Acts 20:28**). When men think of the Church of Christ they think of parties, either a broad conglomeration of alliances such as the "one cup Church of Christ," "liberal Church of Christ," "conservative Church of Christ," etc. or one of those parties individually.

* When God thinks of the church of Christ, He thinks of a number of individuals unknown to men (**2 Tim. 2:19**). When men think of the Church of Christ, they think of a loose association of local churches whose numbers can be approximated, for example 1,260,838 in the United States according to Mac Lynn's 1994 directory. Perhaps they will focus more on the numbers given for a more narrow association of churches ("non institutional," "one cup," "no class", etc.).

* When God thinks of the church of Christ, He sees an indivisible body composed of individuals with different levels of spiritual growth (**1 Cor. 1:13; 2 Peter 3:18, Rev. 2,3**). When men think of the Church of Christ, they think of a group of local churches that has divided through the years over issues such as instrumental music, premillennialism and institutionalism. They say that the "next thing that will divide the church" (the conservative alliance, or collection of churches) will be the marriage, divorce and remarriage issue.

* When God thinks of the church of Christ, He thinks of those growing in Him with obedient hearts in spite of imperfections (**John 17:6**). When men think of the Church of Christ, they think of those who conform to unwritten creeds composed of doctrines that "leaders" have declared to be essential.

* When God thinks of leaders in the church of Christ, He thinks of spiritually poverty stricken servants, who are "last" in the minds of men and yet whose quiet examples transform others (**Matt.**

5:3,16;19:30; 20:25-28). When men think of leaders in the Church of Christ, they think of editors of papers, leaders in colleges or well known preachers who hold many gospel meetings.

* When God thinks of the Savior of the Church, He thinks only of His Son, Jesus Christ. When men think of the Church of Christ, they think of an alliance of local churches that David Lipscomb "saved" from the Missionary Society, Foy E. Wallace "saved" from premillennialism and other leading editors have "saved" from other dangers.

* When God thinks of where to find the church of Christ, He thinks of the hearts of men (**1 Samuel 16:7**). When men think of where to find the Church of Christ, they think of church directories.

* When God thinks of the church of Christ, He thinks of those who have responded to the spiritual attraction for those who are of good ground - the gospel of Jesus Christ (**Romans 1:16; 1 Cor. 2:2**). When men think of the church of Christ, they think of an alliance or movement that itself is the primary attraction to those who are of good ground.

* When God thinks of the church of Christ, He thinks of a glorious body of saved individuals who are allowing themselves to be transformed into the image of His Son, in spite of the wrangling and political maneuvering of men (**Eph. 5:25,26; 2 Cor. 3:18**). When men think of the Church of Christ, they either think of a religious movement that has fragmented itself into dozens of warring factions, each claiming to "have" the truth on dozens of difficult issues, or they think of one of the factions.

What do you think of when you think of the church of Christ?

