

Part Two: Change Agents and Innovators Deny the New Testament Pattern

7. Denying the New Testament Pattern in Matters of Faith and Practice

We have studied how we use direct commands, express statements, approved apostolic examples, and necessary inference to establish the New Testament pattern. When men come with new ideas for worship and for what constitutes a true believer, the elders and congregation must ask: Where is the New Testament pattern? Our plea is to speak as the very word of God (1 Pet 4:11), to follow the example of the early church (1 Th 2:14), and to obey the Lord and his holy prophets and apostles (Mt 28:19-20). This plea is nowhere on the agenda of change agents and innovators. These false teachers are dividing the church and attacking the faith once delivered for all time (Jude 3). Their postmodern agenda transcends Bible teaching in an effort that mimics the most modernistic of the denominations, subverting the faith. Faithful Christians must look closely at what these change agents and innovators say and do, searching the scriptures daily to see if their teaching is true (Acts 17:11). Do not expect change agents and innovators to tell you outright what they believe. Rather they will assert themselves, inserting their false practices, ridiculing those who do not go along.

Innovators and change agents deny New Testament authority in matters of faith and practice. Their efforts usually focus on what makes a *true believer* and what is *true worship*.

What will they say? They will say the New Testament is not a pattern but a love letter, an expression of God's desires, not God's instructions. You will hear that we need a broader more all-inclusive view of the Bible. They will advance a new concept in the non-Biblical terms *core gospel*. Focusing on the death, burial, and resurrection, they will exclude the New Testament teaching on fellowship and worship as not being a part of their *core gospel*. Their ideas of unity will emerge giving advent to the fellowshiping of denominations and worshiping as the denominations worship. They will say that the New Testament is absent of prescriptive scriptures on worship that say that this is how you do it. You find principles, but not really rules, they will say. And the New Testament is *not* an instruction manual about worship.

What does the Bible say? Peter gave an answer that is true from Moses until now:

Moses said, 'the Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brethren; to Him you shall give heed' to everything He says to you. 23 And it will be that every soul that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.' 24 And likewise, all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and his successors onward, also announced these days." Acts 3:22-24.

This is a certain message with a certain outcome and no room for deviation. Paul said: "What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. 14 Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you. NIV 2 Tim 1:13-14.

And for those who do not keep the pattern of sound teaching and guard it, Gal 1:7-9 is clear:

There are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! 9 As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!

They replace New Testament authority with the assertions of their leaders. These assertions are clever in their deceit. Of course, if we have no examples, commands, or express statements that are binding, human opinion triumphs, and human assertions are permissible.

What will they say? One teacher started with talking about all the passages that teach us to care for the needy and how little we do. He moved deftly to singing and that we have only two passages that commanded us to sing, and yet we do that faithfully. Then suddenly he was saying that only two passages that tell us to sing do not preclude using instruments. The deed was done! Back to the need to care for poor people!

Another preacher was in the midst of advocating innovations to the worship. He was using the crippled man in Acts 3 who celebrated his healing by jumping and praising God to justify hand clapping and arm waving in the worship today. Now that was bad enough, and we will discuss it later. In reading about Peter and John going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, he inserted: "Basically you have two preachers going to church." "It was about three in the afternoon. That's a little different from when we have services." Without another word, he went

back to reading. Notice what he has taught—going to the Jewish temple is going to church. And the Jewish service of worship is the same as ours except the hour. The implied conclusion is that when we worship with denominations we are doing just what Peter and John were doing—a complete perversion of the scriptures.

Another preacher was asking for a balance between ritualism and novelty in worship. He said that just because we always do things does not make them worship. However, he added we should not do something new just to be doing it. Now, note his illustration: like bringing in a marching band. *More people want the new; and for the sake of the other people, we should do it.* He has effectively taught the instruments in worship are all right, for the sake of other people.

What does the Bible say? Acts 17:11 says that the Bereans were “examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so.” *What is the answer?* We read in 1 Peter 4:11 “If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God.” NIV. How true is the prophecy:

Just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. 2 Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; 3 and in their greed *they will exploit you with false words . . .* [emp. added] 2 Peter 2:1-3.