

Conclusion

The issues of the change agents and innovators mimic what is happening across the denominational world. In many churches the changes will appear minor. In others, they will run quickly to the excesses of praise worship, contemporary worship, and the community church. In the extreme the emotionalism will run to speaking in tongues and miracles. In the end some churches will have full fellowship with unbaptized believers. This logic will also eventually lead to the fellowship of those in non-Christian groups, such as Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, and Hindus.

As every wave of doctrine floods and every wind of doctrine blows, we must stand on the firm foundation of God:

. . . the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, 'The Lord knows those who are His,' and, 'Everyone who names the name of the Lord is to abstain from wickedness.' 2 Tim 2:19.

The struggle will be different from those of the 20th century. The change agents and innovators discount the authority of the New Testament, relegating it to advice and characterize it as a love letter. In previous divisions, for the most part, parties on both sides claimed the truth of God's word in support of their positions. Today, the innovations are preceded by the claim of a new hermeneutic—a device designed to circumvent the authority of the apostles and holy prophets in defining the New Testament pattern. Therefore, they may reject the pattern and proceed in worship and fellowship to suit themselves, rejecting the truth of the Gospel. It will not be a debate on what the Bible says, but a debate on the very authority of the New Testament itself.

It is important that faithful churches take their stand now. For faithful brethren will easily see the sophistry of the change agents and falsehood of their innovations. The longer we wait, the larger the breach in the walls of the church. Some will cry that we who stand for the truth of the gospel are the dividers and troublemakers. They will want us to be quiet and unassertive in the path of their destruction. We will be labeled and branded, castigated and derided. In whatever comes, be assured it is as Christ said even though the division cuts to the quick of family and friends. In Luke 12:49-53 the Lord prophesied of times like these:

49 I have come to cast fire upon the earth; and how I wish it were already kindled! 50 But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is accomplished! 51 Do you suppose that I came to grant peace on earth? I tell you, no, but rather division; 52 for from now on five members in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three. 53 They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.

In the coming years we may experience a baptism of fire and suffering of our own for the agents of change are already at work. We must look to the word of truth the gospel of our salvation for our security; and we must use the sword of the Spirit, the word of God to defeat the false teaching. Some churches will divide; some churches will depart into apostasy; but the true church of the Lord Jesus Christ will survive until He delivers the kingdom to the Father. In the meantime, we must each be like the apostle Paul:

7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; 8 in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing. 2 Tim 4:7-8.

The outcome of our struggle is set in heaven. According to Heb 12:22-24, our progress and promise is firm:

22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, 23 to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, 24 and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel.

In Heb 12:28-29 those who attack the kingdom cannot shake it:

28 Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; 29 for our God is a consuming fire.

And finally, let us pray for the Savior's return:

17 The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost. 18 I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book; 19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book. 20 He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming quickly." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. 21 The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.