

# Separation APPLIED

THE FUNDAMENTALIST IS NOT TRYING TO BE UNLOVING, SCHISMATIC OR EXCLUSIVE. HE IS SIMPLY DESIRING TO BE OBEDIENT TO THE LORD AND HIS WORD ABOVE ALL ELSE.

by Dennis W. Costella

The Biblical doctrine of separation is based on one of God's essential attributes — His Holiness. He never looks upon sin with the least degree of approval and this necessarily extends to His Will concerning the conduct of His children. We are called unto fellowship with God. This results in a separation from the things of the world which are in direct opposition to His very nature. "But as He which hath called you is Holy, so be ye Holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye Holy; for I am Holy." I Peter 1:15,16.

Most believers agree that the Bible teaches the principle of separation — but very few practice the full intent of the doctrine. This is especially true when our fellowships and associations are examined. The things we consider to be most loving, expedient or non-divisive should never be of primary consideration in this matter. Our greatest concern should be consistency with the plain teaching of the Word of God.

The believer's separation from evil and every false way is always God's order. We were called to be separated unto Christ the moment we were saved. We are admonished to now walk in a sanctified, separated manner in our Christian lives. When the Lord comes back again and raptures His Church, we will be part-takers of that great, final separation! Yes, indeed, separation is a precious Biblical doctrine!

Although separation is a prominent theme throughout the Scriptures, the problem seems to come in its application. The prohibition of identification with blatant godlessness and unbelief is readily accepted as a Biblical imperative. Yet, at the same time, Christians find it much more difficult to understand why we are also commanded to separate from ANY-ONE or ANYTHING that is disobedient to the Word of God.

The first aspect of this doctrine is separation from the evil of the world and from all unbelieving individuals and organizations. II Corinthians 6:14-18 plainly states that the believer must not be "unequally yoked together (fellowship, association or identification) with unbelievers . . ." but is to "come out from among them, and be separate." A fundamentalist must never join with any man or organization where those represented are not clear in their testimony of the new birth or their strict adherence to the fundamental doctrines of the Christian Faith. Any common endeavor (worship, dialogue, evangelism, relief, education, etc.) would be in direct conflict with the above-mentioned commandment. Such things, if undertaken, identify Christians with the liberal, apostate position of unbelievers.

Our responsibility, however, does not stop here. Ephesians 5:11 commands us to "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." We must not only separate from all association or identification with groups such as the National and World Councils of Churches — we must also vehemently sound a warning to other believers who might subtly be drawn into complicity with the ecumenical apostasy. False religious leaders may present an amiable, pious exterior. But our duty is still to oppose and expose their unbiblical practices. I Timothy 6:3-5; II Timothy 3:5.

A heretic who denies a fundamental doctrine of the Christian Faith is to be rejected, not embraced! Titus 3:10. The clear call is for everyone who names the name of Christ to separate himself from every dishonorable vessel, i.e., those who have turned away from the truth of the infallible Word. Only then will the believer be "meet (worthy) for the Master's use, prepared unto every good work." Only then will we have fellowship "with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." Read carefully II Timothy 2:19-22.