



Guest Editorial

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WINDS OF CHANGE

In one of his recent radio sermons, Dr. Billy Graham quoted a Professor of Religion from Luther University as saying: "Everything that has been nailed down is coming loose". He simply meant that the Christian world is experiencing a mental and moral upheaval that is shaking it to its very foundations. We are passing through a period when everything that was once considered a fundamental part of the Gospel is now on trial for its life. Everything is, indeed, being pried loose, re-evaluated, and "up-dated". For the most part, we have not been made any the wiser or better by the whole unlovely ordeal.

About the only good realized from this religious bolshevism is that it has pressed the Church to take a long hard look at itself. No longer are people accepting religion in large doctrinal doses; they want to know what they are taking, and why.

Now, the shock-waves of this upheaval have registered, too, upon the spiritual seismograph of a people called Reformed Baptists. We are asking our own brand of questions, such as these: "Has our church changed very much in this generation? If so, how, and where will this change take us? Are today's youth as spiritual as their fathers? What will the next generation of Reformed Baptists be? Will they be a holiness people, or will they become a church that is holiness in name only?" Let's step up and take a closer look.

First then, have we (Reformed Baptists) changed within the last generation or so? To answer plainly, "Yes, we have". Take the matter of spontaneity in our church services, for instance. Our meetings were once characterized by a free and ready

responsiveness during public prayer, special singing and testimonies. The preacher's sermons met repeated salvos of "Amen!" that were designed to be heard all over the church. Any semblance of formality or ritualism was roundly denounced, and the atmosphere in general lent itself to visible and vocal demonstrations of "joy in the Holy Ghost".

Then there is the matter of simplicity. Love for plainness in dress and manner of living made life for Reformed Baptists to be very simple indeed. The pride, parade and vanities of the world were so absolutely shunned that their social life, as such, was greatly confined. For the most part, the only thing they wanted from the world was a path through. And, amazingly enough, few found this to be burdensome. They sang lustily, and with a justifiable degree of pride:

"I've no thirsting for life's pleasures,
Nor adornings rich and gay,
I have found a richer treasure,
One that fadeth not away".

Again, take the matter of worldliness. I grew up in a typical Reformed Baptist Church where worldliness was denounced in all its various forms, and sin was spelled out in large, legible letters. The preachers left nobody guessing! The amusements, fashions, and habits of the world were singled out, labelled and preached against with a good degree of alacrity. For the past

He Is Risen

Rev. R. T. Benson, Mar.

the King's highway

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couple of decades, however, we have witnessed a more tolerant attitude toward some of these things.

Where, then, is all of this change taking us? It will take us a bit farther than we want to go if we aren't careful. There is the danger of feeling that nothing is really worldly and everything is all right. Perhaps we should remember again the wisdom of Saint Paul: "All things are lawful, but all things edify not". I believe we are struggling to find a more realistic approach toward externals, or worldliness, since that is a more familiar term. But we certainly must exercise godly caution lest we carry our liberty toward legitimates too far. If we are going to err, let's err on the side of restraint. I read some time ago that it is possible to absorb a certain amount of sawdust in one's daily diet without experiencing any ill effects. The article went on to say, however, that while a little sawdust did no harm, neither did it do any good, and too much of it could do a lot of harm. I don't remember what the writer was trying to prove, but I do know that, for the Christian, too much sawdust, too much of the legitimate and permissible things of the world, can do harm. Permit me to illustrate. Television is perfectly legitimate, but he is a foolish man who does not know that too much of it will do him great damage. Let's face it; there isn't very much nourishment in sawdust!