

CHRONICLE QUESTIONS

What is your understanding of the reasons for the separation of 1906?

My understanding of the division with the instrumentalists is that it was a basic difference in Biblical interpretation. It first evinced itself in music worship and mission societies, but the basic difference was over taking the Bible for what it said, or taking the liberty of inserting the desire of men. It was reborn in recent years in re to either accepting God's silence as authoritative, or taking God's silence as liberty.

What are the chief doctrinal differences between the two groups today?

Today the issues have multiplied, as was predicted and expected. In addition to mission work and music, some additional problems involve fellowship with denominations, women in leadership and pulpits, communion changes, festivals, and acceptance of un-baptized persons as saved. Once the bar was down about biblical interpretation, there is no logical end to changes. The desires of men's hearts will dictate more changes (1 Kings 12:33). One now rearing its head is verbal plenary inspiration.

What are your thoughts about the wisdom of increased cooperation between the two groups? Is this a positive or negative development in your view?

Fellowship between us and them is a compromise pure and simple. The camel's nose would be in the tent.

If this cooperation proceeds, where do you see churches going in the next five to 10 years?

In the next 5, 10, 20 years, our congregations will only be a few steps behind them in most of their digressions. Let the current generation of folks over the age of 50 die off, and the digressions will continue full blown.

How do Churches of Christ perceive independent Christian Churches today? (Or ... How do independent Christian Churches perceive Churches of Christ today?)

Some independent Christian churches are still mostly conservative. One has to take each case into consideration separately. Most of them look on us as ultra conservative and narrow-minded due to our refusal to accept them. There are isolated congregations, particularly throughout the Midwest, that have not digressed as much as most of them. However, their basic hermeneutic is still the same; they just have not been inclined to accept the newer digressions. Some few of them will teach and practice scriptural

conversion to Christ, but then they will immediately infect them with false worship and doctrines.

Can Churches of Christ and Christian Churches have a closer relationship without losing their doctrinal integrity? Please explain your answer.

No, we cannot fellowship them and please the Lord. They go beyond the things that are written (1 Cor. 4:6), they have caused divisions and occasions of stumbling (Rom. 16:17), they have taught different doctrines (1 Tim. 1:3), they have not consented to sound words (1 Tim. 6:3), they have corrupted the simplicity and purity of Christ (2 Cor. 11:3), they have perverted and preached another gospel (Gal. 1:6ff), they have heaped to themselves teachers after their own lusts (2 Tim. 4:3), they have sown faction in the body of Christ (Tit. 3:10), they have ignored God's plea for unity (1 Cor. 1:10), they have brought in destructive heresies (2 Pet. 2:1), and they have shown themselves to be unstedfast, wresting the scriptures (2 Pet. 3:16). These are just a few of the things that show we cannot please the Lord and fellowship false teachers.

How important is this issue to most church members in the pews, and how important should it be? Likewise, how important is this issue to most church leaders, and how important should it be

This issue is not well known in the pew for preachers have not preached on this issue. Most of our folks are simply uninformed about doctrinal differences between Christian churches and the Lord's church. Likewise many elders in our churches are uninformed about the serious differences. We have cultivated a medley of leadership in our churches that are good leaders, but pitifully quasi-ignorant in the Bible. Few elders in our churches are equal in Bible knowledge to their preachers, and this is a radical change in our churches in the last 50 years. So, in the pew and leadership in our churches today, there is a very dangerous lack of indoctrination of what the Lord has taught.

Anything else about this issue that you think is important to address at this time?

Yes, there is something else. Far too many professors in our universities and colleges are breaking down the walls of Jerusalem. They have imbibed deeply of their denominational teachers and scholars in their graduate studies, and they have returned to teach our young men and women what amounts to denominational attitudes and doctrines. I fear the majority of graduates of most of our universities have now seen so much practice of multi-cultural religion that they know not the identity of the Lord's church. This is true just as well in the Bible graduates who plan to preach or work in some facet of the church. This is not limited to our accredited schools, but is now beginning to creep into a preacher's school or two.