

“OH, FOR AN HONEST FALSE TEACHER”

Under the title above Rubel Shelly wrote a stirring article a few decades ago. In it he ably exposed and decried the hypocrisy and deception of liberals as they made an ever-stronger push to move the Lord's church leftward. A decade or so after Rubel wrote his article, he was employing the very hypocrisy and deception he so well analyzed in his article to deny his own surrender to liberalism's seduction. He became (and remains) an ardent advocate of the loose and latitudinarian movement to cast the New Testament church fully in the denominational mold.

Things have only gotten worse since Shelly's abandonment of reverence for Scriptural authority. Although many of the wolves were forced to wear sheep's clothing (the Lord's figure for hypocrisy and deception [Mat. 7:15–16]) for a few decades, their influence has become so pervasive that they hardly need bother with disguise anymore. So many pew-sitters have surrendered to feelings rather than to thinking in spiritual matters that they eagerly ingurgitate whatever garbage the *Christian Chronicle* and its network regurgitates as if it were choice prime rib. Schools that at one time still attempted a defense of their increasingly liberal leanings (e.g., ACU, LCU, LU, HU, HGSR, et al.) do not even pretend to deny their lust for all things anti-Scriptural.

However, liberals still find the tactics of deception and hypocrisy to be necessary on occasion. Following the announcement that, on an upcoming lectureship, I was to review *Illusions of Innocence*, a book co-authored by C. Leonard Allen and Richard T. Hughes, a brother wrote me as follows: “I have read neither this nor any other of Leonard Allen's publications, but have heard several disturbing comments about them beginning while he was still at ACU and continuing.” He went on to say that some of his children are members of the congregation where Allen is a member and where he often teaches the adult Bible class on Sunday mornings. This brother's offspring profess never to have heard him say anything they question, but when visiting there, my correspondent has heard him lament the fact that some of us don't count those in the Christian Church as brethren. He commented concerning Allen: “Perhaps he knows better than to espouse his dangerous ideas in the Sunday morning Bible class because there are some in that class who are not afraid to challenge him.”

Upon reading the foregoing, I thought, “Bingo.” Allen likely fears that, did he reveal how extreme his convictions are, he might not only be challenged, but might also lose his teaching position. At least for the present, this wolf continues to wear his sheep suit. Concerning Allen, I responded in part to this inquiring brother:

His counting the Christian Church folks as our brethren is a relatively “mild” part of his liberalism. He is a “liberal’s liberal” who is incapable of conceiving of the Lord’s church as anything but a denomination, and he thinks it is a downright self-righteous and mean one at that. His apparent hiding of that fact as he teaches a Bible class is sheer hypocrisy. (But who ever heard of a liberal [in religion or politics] who had a problem with lying and deceiving?) He must be laughing behind the backs of those gullible folks in the _____ church whom he has thus far deceived [including my correspondent’s children]. If his heretical views have not yet come out in that class, I guarantee that sooner or later they will. Tragically, by the time anyone is “on to him,” he will have gained a cadre of sympathizers and defenders who will refuse to believe that he is a poison peddler....

Allen is director of ACU Press, which has issued a veritable stream of extremely damaging liberal books over the past 25 years or so, including several by Allen. He is also editorial director for Leafwood Publications and presides over an advisory board that includes Max Lucado, Lynn Anderson, John Allen Chalk, and Leroy Garrett (does that tell you anything about Allen?).... Two of his previous teaching positions (Biola and Fuller Universities) required him to subscribe to the doctrines of faith-only and dispensational premillennialism, as well as to the entire denominational umbrella concept. As you can see, he has the strongest possible convictions regarding 2 John 9–11 and fellowship (note my sarcasm). ...The main thrust of the book he co-authored with fellow radical liberal, Richard Hughes, is that restoration is a pipe dream, and those who think they have achieved it are under an illusion (i.e., we are “innocent,” naive, gullible, simple, etc.). He not only denies the **possibility** of restoration, but the **desirability** and **necessity** of it as well.

So in C. Leonard Allen we have a man who years ago renounced the vital Scriptural principles for which most of the brethren where he teaches a Bible class likely stand. Assuming those brethren believe they are members of the church of Christ (in the full Scriptural sense of that term), the man they are allowing to teach them counts them as naïve simpletons who labor under a mere illusion. I hesitate not to identify brother Allen as a hypocrite and a deceiver, pretending to be something he is not until he judges the time is right to reveal his extreme views without cloak or varnish. In the Shelly expression, *honest false teacher*, we see a classic oxymoron that fits all liberals such as C. Leonard Allen.

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