

On Bidding God Speed

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John wrote words of stern warning in 2 John 9: "For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." John was warning about our attitude toward those who advocate error. To offer support, in word or deed, to those who have compromised the Truth is to become their "partner in crime." This principle also includes churches or schools that have abandoned the faith.

In light of this passage, many are bidding God speed to those who propagate error. They are, in fact, practicing a form of "Unity in Diversity." I do not have in mind those who are themselves liberals (no less could be expected from them). Tragically, some otherwise good, solid, conservative brethren and congregations are doing it also. One may see evidence of this repeatedly in their church bulletins. Their behavior amounts to a strange contradiction in which they are tearing down the very thing they are otherwise trying to build up.

The articles they reprint in their bulletins demonstrate this phenomenon. I am amazed at the carelessness with which bulletin articles of liberal brethren are borrowed and reprinted, and I plead with my sound brethren to use more care. I fully realize that a given article by a false teacher may teach the Truth and no error and may do it in an effective and forceful way. However, it is nonetheless dangerous and harmful to Truth to use such.

At least three damaging results occur when faithful brethren publish articles by liberal brethren: (1) They inescapably imply endorsement of the writer beyond merely his article, (2) they give him a platform, notoriety, and credibility that should be denied him, and (3) they encourage naive and ignorant readers to listen to him when he teaches error.

Occasionally a good brother will innocently run such an article, not knowing the real direction of its author. (This fact underscores the need for us all [especially preachers and elders] to make it a point to keep up with "who" is saying and doing "what.") However, I see this in some bulletins with such frequency that it can hardly be mere oversight. It appears that the editor knows the article he is running is by a false teacher, but he sees nothing wrong with thereby endorsing him and giving him a forum anyway.

If such careless behavior is not bidding God speed to a false teacher, I know not what to call it. Again, I call upon sound brethren everywhere to cease contributing to the doctrinal confusion so rampant among the saints, which they do by publishing articles by unsound, compromising brethren. May we all remember that we are known as much by who/what we commend as by who/what we condemn.

Congregations also participate in error when they **publicize activities of liberals and apostates** in their church bulletins (including such things as lectureships conducted by “Christian” universities). Occasionally, even careful editors do this due to ignorance of the source, sponsors, or implications of an event. Sometimes a liberal member of a local congregation will even sneak something into a bulletin when the preacher, who would not have allowed it, is out of town. However, when one consistently sees such things in the same bulletin it is evident that the editor considers them harmless. It seems almost as if some churches feel somehow obligated to print every announcement they receive, regardless of its source or content.

When a sound church announces (by bulletin, from the pulpit, on the bulletin board, or otherwise) activities of congregations or schools that are known for their apostasy or programs that feature liberal brethren, **it is promoting liberalism**. It thereby gives its implicit approval to said activities and brethren. It encourages sheep to visit the dens of wolves. Do not these brethren see that, at the very best, this practice is sending terribly confused signals to the members of the congregation and to all others (including the liberals) on their mailing lists? Sometimes the same bulletin will oppose one error while promoting another. Preacher “A” in a given congregation may take a strong stand on page 1 against the “Change Agent” movement, while on page 4 preacher “B” (the “youth director”) is urging folks (young and old) to participate in a giant “youth rally” sponsored by and featuring liberal brethren.

The liberals expect their cohorts to help them publicize their activities. They must engage in much laughing behind our backs when they see bulletins of sound churches helping them advance their cause by publicizing (and thereby endorsing) their activities.

We are to “have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness” (whether moral or doctrinal) (Eph. 5:11a), and encouraging people to attend the activities of apostates is inescapably a form of fellowship. Rather than encouraging people to attend the programs of apostates (and thus engage in fellowship with them), we are commanded, “even reprove them” (Eph. 5:11). May we be careful always to promote only those activities among brethren that support and advance the Truth. May we always oppose all activities among brethren that are otherwise.

[**Note:** I wrote this article for and it was published in *The Lighthouse*, weekly bulletin of Northpoint Church of Christ, Denton, TX, April 15, 2012, of which I was editor.]

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