

The Narrow Gate

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A multitude of brethren (and most all of the world) would almost rather be shot than be called "narrow-minded." However, the Lord said:

Enter ye in by the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many are they that enter in thereby. For narrow is the gate and straitened the way, that leadeth unto life, and few are they that find it (Mat. 7:13-14)

The terrible triplets of a revived Romanticism, Existentialism, and Humanism have combined to produce a spirit of an "anything goes" super tolerance (for everything but intolerance of evil, of course) that laughs at duly-constituted authority and God-given verities. In society it has led to chaotic and discordant music, literature, and art and to such social ills as murderous, unrestricted abortion, an ever-burgeoning crime rate, and "morals" below the level of a stray tom cat.

This philosophy has bled over into the church, bringing a relaxation of moral standards, in both dress and conduct. It has brought open rebellion to the God-given authority to elders in the church. It has foisted the attitude that perhaps sin and religious error are not so bad after all.

It has attempted to cast off book, chapter, and verse preaching that is to the point and that demands a response, in favor of short, sweet pop-psychology "talks" filled with stories and "funnies." It is causing some of our colleges to turn out "Bible majors" who have hardly been exposed to the issue of instrumental music and who can't even spell or pronounce "premillennialism" (much less refute it) and who have no clear convictions on the distinctiveness of the church.

The super tolerance syndrome in the church has resulted in the utterly false position that refuses to reprove, rebuke, and challenge the errors and immoralities all about us and among us. It has spawned the "open microphone" concept in which it is averred that the weakest and most erroneous brethren have as much right to teach and address the church as do sound preachers and elders. It has robbed hundreds of churches of their duty to discipline those who will not repent of their immorality and/or false doctrines and deeds. (It is hard to imagine what one would have to do or teach in many of our congregations to warrant even a mild reproof from the elders or preacher.)

The teachings of the Lord on the exclusiveness of His Way have found many deaf ears among His disciples of late. The injunctions to keep the church pure are just too narrow for many, regardless of how plainly the Gospel teaches them.

[**Note:** I wrote this article for and it was published in *The Lighthouse*, weekly bulletin of Northpoint Church of Christ, Denton, TX, October 30, 2016, of which I was editor.]

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