

“Big-Tent” Religion

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Members of both major political parties talk about “big-tent” policies. By *big-tent* they mean inclusion of those who hold views diverse from and/or contradictory to core party principles – if they will vote the party ticket. Men will long debate whether such represents good politics, but it undeniably represents considerable compromise.

The *big-tent* approach to religion is evident on every hand. At one time the major denominations required conformity to certain conditions/principles for membership, but *big-tent* religion has largely eliminated such. Long ago, ones who were divorced and remarried apart from Jesus’ Scriptural cause (Mat. 5:32; 19:9), would be excluded. Until fairly recently, women were not allowed to occupy pulpits. As recently as the late 19th century fierce opposition to worshipping with instrumental music still existed in some “mainline” denominations (e.g., Presbyterian). The homosexual element has convinced some denominations not only to let them in, but also to appoint them “Ring Masters” in their “Big Tents.” Some churches now accept practicing sodomites, while others are debating their acceptance and/or their “marriages.”

The community/mega-churches are a product of the *big-tent* syndrome. They usually bear no denominational identity, and they strongly emphasize inclusiveness. Some of them arose from community-wide polls that asked residents what they desired in a “church.” The pollsters then tailored a “church” to fit the tally. These groups commonly feature a *grace-only, non-condemning, guilt-free, feel-goodism* “gospel” rooted in pop-psychology (e.g., Joel Osteenism). The *big-tent* approach almost guarantees the need for a literal “big tent” to accommodate the crowds it attracts.

Was Jesus a “big-tent” preacher? Did he build a “big-tent” church (Mat. 16:18)? Read His following statements, and judge for yourself:

1. “Except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins” (John 8:24a).
2. “Except ye repent, ye shall all...perish” (Luke 13:3).
3. “Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God!” (John 3:5).
4. “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven” (Mat. 7:21).

5. "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:24).
6. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned" (Mark. 16:16).

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