

"Come Forth, My People" – No. 9

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When brethren who are faithful at heart find themselves in a congregation that is no longer faithful, they often have great difficulty leaving. Among the excuses these brethren employ for continuing in such a church is the following:

I don't approve of the corruptions and innovations I see in the congregation, but I might cause division if I leave.

Such good brethren have often had this fear (and its accompanying guilt feeling) planted in their minds by apostate brethren. Of course, one is right to be cautious and concerned about division. Unnecessary, selfish, ego-centered division is ever proscribed in the New Testament (1 Tim. 1:4–6; 6:4–5; 2 Tim. 2:14; 23–26; Tit. 3:10; et al.). However, one is not right to exalt a false and dishonorable "peace" above Truth and godliness. It is a favorite ploy of liberals and apostates to hurl the label, "troublemaker," at those who object to their departures. Many a devoted saint has been falsely accused of seeking to divide a congregation, when in reality, all that he or she did was stand for the Truth and object to some unauthorized doctrines or deeds.

Doubtless, some misguided souls will accuse us of encouraging or trying to cause **unholy division** by this series of articles. Division, perhaps, but unholy division, we categorically deny. While Christ is "the Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6), He also came to bring a sword of division on earth (Mat. 10:34; Luke 12:51–52). When some refuse and others are determined to be submissive to the Word of Christ, divisions (including congregations, friendships, and families) will inevitably result. When a division occurs in such a situation it is one that must occur. Indeed, it even has the blessing of the Lord. **Such division is not caused by those who stand with the Lord, but by those who refuse to do so**, regardless of accusations to the contrary by those who have departed from the faith.

When a church has lost her bearings, is being blown about by every wind of doctrine, and is wallowing in an ocean of error, those who do not want to go down with her had better "jump ship." The Lord's own directive on this very matter is found in Revelation 18:4: **"Come forth, my people, out of her, that ye have no fellowship with her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."**

If leaving a digressive congregation results in division, let the blame be placed where it belongs – at the feet of those who no longer respect the authority of God's Word!

[**Note:** I wrote this article for and it was published in *The Edifier*, weekly bulletin of Pearl Street Church of Christ, Denton, TX, June 21, 1990, of which I was editor.]

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