

Who's Murdering Creativity?

Dub McClish

The editor of one of the newer brotherhood journals wrote the following terse paragraph in his editorial some time ago:

Creativity, murdered by dogmatism, leaves behind a burned out, disillusioned corpse of what might have otherwise been an inspiring and heroic example of what faith can do. Unnecessary conservatism would set the church back a hundred years before it would say yes to a new idea.

We ask our brother, "Is there no place for 'dogmatism' in religion?" Is the spirit of innovation/"creativity" in religion that which heroically exemplifies "what faith can do"? Let us test this matter. One wants to be "creative" with baptism and thus advocates that one be baptized in milk instead of water (a suggestion actually made to this writer one time). Another wants to be "creative" in worship and introduces "holy dances" danced to the vibes of a "holy organ." Another wants to be innovative in church organization, so he establishes a structure with an evangelist at the top who pulls strings, and his puppets genuflect all over the world. On what grounds would our brother be dogmatic about milk baptism, if he would be? Given his plaudits for "creativity" he could hardly object to the organ-accompanied dance or the "Boston Plan" or organization—indeed, he has been known to give comfort to the Boston folks and to the organ-players, if not the dancers.

Our brother (and his comrades) in this push for "creativity" in the church of the Lord has failed to recognize that God has always placed careful limitations on man's religious belief and practice. Ask Cain, Nadab and Abihu and King Saul if you doubt this. In fact, ask the whole nation of Israel who were given careful directions with attendant curses for ignoring them. It is no different in the New Testament (Would He be so careful about His plans in the inferior system and then have no care for the superior?)

Our brother and others like him seem to have forgotten that there are matters of obligation that we must defend to the death if necessary. In such a loose article as he wrote the impression is left that there are few if any matters of obligation and that it is

even anti-Christian to be dogmatic on anything. If this is what constitutes “murdering creativity” then we should all want to compete for the privilege of firing the first bullet!

Of course, we can be “creative” in optional or indifferent matters, but where God has spoken, we are obligated to be “uncreative,” submitting to the will of God. The editorial written by our brother surely does not distinguish between the two.

[**Note:** I wrote this article for and it was published in *The Edifier*, weekly bulletin of Pearl Street Church of Christ, Denton, TX, April 14, 1988, of which I was editor.]

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