

Departures: Some Concluding Thoughts

By John R. Gibson

As we conclude our sermon series on departures from the faith, I want to offer some concluding thoughts from *Centuries of Change v. the Unchanging Word*. I don't include the Scriptures for each of these points because they were included in the previous pages. (This workbook that I put together several years ago is available on the church's website in the articles section and, in addition, if anyone wants a printed copy, we would be happy to supply one.)

- ◆ Love God.
 - ◇ We must not serve God merely out of habit or family tradition.
 - ◇ Let us ever be drawn to Him by His love. 2 Cor. 5:14, 15

- ◆ Loving God requires obedience to Him. 1 John 5:3
 - ◇ The Lord has called us to be a people who listen to His law. Isa. 2
 - ◇ A strict interpretation of the Scriptures, accompanied by careful obedience to God's word is not legalism.

- ◆ Study!

- ◆ In disputes we must conduct ourselves honorably.

- ◆ Avoid centralization.
 - Let's keep elders shepherding the flock "among" them.

- ◆ Remember that one error (or misunderstanding) can easily lead to another and take us farther and farther from God's truth.

- ◆ Have faith in the power of God's word.

- ◆ We must not allow nationalism to triumph over loyalty to our King.

- ◆ Never lose the "pilgrim" mentality.
 - ◇ We were not called to "fit in" with the world around us.

- ◆ God must always be worshiped as He has directed and not as we desire.

- ◆ Any work assigned to local churches can be accomplished without the need for a "middle-man" organization.

- ◆ God's silence should be seen as prohibitive and not permissive.

- ◆ There cannot be justifiable expedients for unauthorized practices.

- ◆ Individual Christians may do some things which the church (a collective body of Christians) is not authorized to do.
- ◆ In the New Testament, the treasury was used in benevolence only for needy saints.
- ◆ The work of the local church does not include social activities.
- ◆ We must be evangelistic, but our appeal must be “Christ and Him crucified.”

Voices from the Past

By John R. Gibson

History is simply what has happened in the past and is not our authority. We must always look to God’s word for our guidance (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 John 1:9), but it is interesting to note that many churches of Christ would criticize Jones Road for positions that were once common among the saints. Consider one more excerpt from *Centuries of Change*.

1. The *Gospel Advocate* once opposed church sponsored recreation.

“It is not the duty of the church to provide entertainment for young or old. It is not a part of the program of the church to provide playgrounds, programs of entertainment, or supervisors of such programs.”

“Building recreation rooms and providing and supervising recreational activities at the expense of the church is a departure from the simple gospel plan as revealed in the New Testament. The church might as well relieve the parents of feeding and disciplining all the young people at church expense as to take over the job of entertaining and supervising their recreation at church expense.” *Teacher’s Annual Lesson Commentary on Bible School Lessons, 1951*, pp. 226, 229
2. In 1944 Floyd Decker wrote a tract on why he left the Christian Church. Included in his criticisms of the Christian Church were the following.
 - ◇ The use of missionary, benevolent and educational organizations to do the work of the church.
 - ◇ Carnal Appeals: carnivals, bands, plays, choruses, dramatics, camps, kitchens, fellowship halls.
3. Bill Hall stated that he did not know of a single church of Christ in Montgomery, AL in 1954 that had a kitchen and fellowship hall in its building. *Restudying Issues of ‘50s and ‘60s*, pp. 31, 32