

EDITOR'S NOTES

Leonard W. Pine

Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain.
(Philippians 2:14-16)

That the church is to be a purifying agent in this world comes as no surprise to any of us: I believe that all of us would acknowledge that we are called to “shine as lights in the world” reflecting the light of Jesus (Mt. 5:16; cf. Jn. 8:12). What does surprise us, especially as biblical fundamentalists, is how this shining takes place.

The contemporary fundamental Church has usually taken the phrase “holding fast the word of life” to limit “shining as lights” to preaching and evangelism: in short, to *words*. But this limitation is not biblical: it does not reflect the activities of Christ nor the apostles, all of whom ministered to body as well as soul. The passage from Philippians quoted above is itself bracketed in the text by praise unto God for a Savior who gave of himself for his people (2:1-13) and commendation of fellow servants who sacrificed unselfishly for their brethren (2:17-30). Jesus himself commanded us to love our enemies and do good to those who abuse us.

Enter the liberal, modernist mentality, which is intent upon ministering to the body as a prime weapon in the war against sin. The problem is not that the liberal wants to minister to the body: the problem is that it redefines *sin* by calling it *poverty, hunger, oppression, or ignorance*, redefines *salvation* by calling it *wealth, satisfaction, freedom, or education*, and redefines *savior* as *man*, not *Christ* as revealed in Scripture. These redefinitions, and their resultant practices, are what we usually call the *social gospel*: an abandoning of biblical absolutes for the sake of sentimental, man-glorifying pragmatism.

Unfortunately, the orthodox Church has reacted against the abuses of the liberal camp by distrusting social ministries, both within and without the walls of the local church. Consequently, while our preaching may be sound, and our resolutions scorching, our words either never reach the lost or worse, merely illicit the inevitable reaction from cynical hearts that “pretty is as pretty does.” Seeing no love demonstrated through *action*, the lost dismiss the words we *speak*.

It's no secret that a prime key to the growth of the cult of Mormonism, for example, is the loving service they render to their own in times of need. Pseudo-religious organizations like the Masons and Shriners are built upon social activity. The Roman church has used its schools and hospitals for centuries to draw converts into its fold. All this while the true Church sits back in judgment upon others' false theology and wonders why people don't listen to what we *say*!

If we want our words to carry weight, we must remember a simple principle common to every society everywhere: *actions speak louder than words*. This issue of *The WRS Journal* is dedicated to calling the Church to faithful ministry in society without compromising truth. While here we only scratch the surface of what can and should be done, perhaps the articles you read will stir you to “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:16). As always, we welcome your comments!