



Preparing Souls To Serve The Lord

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“Sacred Cows” and Fellowship

By

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For those who might not be familiar with the term “sacred cows,” we cite the following definitions from popular and reputable sources:

“sacred cow >noun an idea, custom, or institution held to be above criticism (with reference to the respect of Hindus for the cow as a sacred animal” (Oxford English Dictionary). “Any person or thing regarded as above criticism or attack” (Webster’s New World Dictionary, Third College Edition). “sacred cow” *noun* **somebody or something beyond criticism:** somebody or something exempt from any criticism by, or interference from, others [Early 20th century. From the sacrosanctity of cattle for Hindus.]” (*Encarta® World English Dictionary* © & (P) 1999 Microsoft Corporation).

Faithful and informed Bible students know that it is not a sin to correct those in error. If we are to please God, how are we to understand the following passages? “**What Is Written in**

the Law? How Readest Thou” (Luke 10:26)?

“Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins” (James 5:19-20).

“I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry” (2 Tim. 4:1-5).

“But when Peter was

come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed” (Gal. 2:11).



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“But

Peter said unto him, thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me” (Acts 8:20-24).

“Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear. I charge thee before

God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality. Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure" (1 Tim. 5:19-22).

"But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God" (Rom. 2:29). "Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel" (Rom. 9:6).

"There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:1-5).

"Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God" (3 John 11).

Questions and Reflections

The questions I wish to pose for all to consider are these: Are there "sacred cows" among our people, or is this merely a prejudicial assumption on the part of some? Are there persons

or institutions that some feel should not be criticized? How can I respect the above passages in the Bible and deny just criticism? Yet, I am fully aware that I can bring upon myself the "holy" wrath of some if I justly criticize the mistakes or questionable practices of some persons and/or some institutions, etc.

Let it be also understood that criticism may be unjust, unfounded, and condemned by the same Bible that demands we be just and fair in our critical analysis. We cite the following passages to show that we know them to be true, and realize that we must abide by what is required of us in them. **"What Is Written in the Law? How Readest Thou" (Luke 10:26)?**

"Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things" (Rom. 2:1).

"Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment" (John 7:24).

"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil" (1 Thess. 5:21-22).

"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets

which were before you" (Matt. 5:10-12).

There were many who unfairly criticized Jesus and the early Christians. There are some today who are not honest in critical analysis of the actions of others. It is possible to criticize at a distance, through third parties, behind a veil of innuendoes and insinuations. Such "hallowed critics" would never come into the open with their indictments for fear of exposure. This type critic has any number of questions and assertions in private, but this type becomes mute when one presses for facts.

The supporters and defenders of these type critics make known their "sacred cows" syndrome. Have you heard or read of them?

"He is a brother in Christ,"

"There is a lot of good done by him/them/this."

"Who gave you the authority to criticize them?"

"You are against orphan children."

"You are opposed to Christian education."

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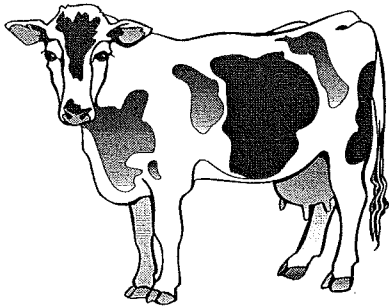
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"You are against young people."

"You are opposed to Christian camps."

"You are prejudiced against African Americans."

"You are opposed to Caucasian (Hispanics, Asian) Americans."



"Hey, don't hide behind me!"

The examples are numberless. When such statements are made, the persons making the allegations should be required to prove them.

Could those liberals involved in schools and orphan homes (their sacred cows) defend the very institutions they have a part in directing? Would those liberal leaders be willing to say in public what they do in private relative to their critics?

Many years ago, the president of David Lipscomb and Freed-Hardeman opposed the liberal elements among us. They opposed, refuted, and exposed the use of instrumental music in worship, those who were seeking to change the worship and organization of the church. How many college presidents do you know today who speak against such deviations? How many leaders of orphan homes speak out against such change agents among us?

Promoting false teaching and false teachers at so called "workshops" is a common practice among us. Yet, when such exposure is made, those exposed hide behind the "sacred cows" of orphan children, schools, young people, etc.

Consistency

Consistency is often missing when the false teacher and/or promoters of false teachers are identified. The exposed "cow" or those who are "herded" by the "cowpuncher" will often "MOO" that the one who criticizes does not love, that he is negative, that he has not talked to the person in private. Yet, at the very time they are making such assertions, they appear to be oblivious that they are guilty of doing the very thing they supposedly abhor—passing judgment or criticizing!

The liberal and persons in error can offer all manner of unjust criticism, but God forbid that someone offer just criticism to them—"Judge not, that ye be not judged!"

Conclusion

Yes, there are "sacred cows" among us. Examples: Colleges and their presidents and directors, Orphan Homes and their directors, "Christian Camps" and their directors, Youth Ministers and their works, Papers and their editors and publishers, et al.

It is a fact that unjustified criticism will come.

It is a fact that just criticism is required of faithful Christians.

It is a fact that we can know the difference between

truth and error, just and unjust assertions.

It is a fact that we should do all we can to correct error while being longsuffering (2 Tim. 4:2; 1 Cor. 13:4), and in meekness, considering ourselves, for we too may have a need of correction (Gal. 6:1-4; 1 Cor. 9:27).

It is a fact that we can not defend error or those promoting it by hiding behind "sacred cows."



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Life of Christ (J. Colwell)

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General Epistles (M. Elledge)

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