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Offending Without Apologising.

Editor's note: This article is prompted by the spectacle of First Minister, Peter Robinson and then Pastor James McConnell bowing to the media-based campaign that followed in the wake of Pastor McConnell's widely publicised comments on the subject of the wickedness and unbiblical nature of Islam and Peter Robinson's support of him.

"Then came his disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying?"

But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind.

And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch," Matthew 15:12-14.

Christians should not seek to offend gratuitously any with their declarations of the truth of God. We are exhorted to engage in "speaking the truth in love," Ephesians 4:15.

Paul the apostle exhorts believers still: "Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God," 1 Corinthians 10:32. And again, "Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed," 2 Corinthians 6:3.

What he means is basically what I said in my opening remarks: Christians should not seek to offend gratuitously any with their declarations of the truth of God.

The Lord Jesus

None spoke the truth more lovingly and tenderly than the Lord Jesus Christ, but He invariably and repeatedly offended very many as He did so.

It is impossible to preach the gospel of Christ without offending the vast majority of people. The gospel is diametrically opposed to all that man holds dear!

Man's sinful condition

Consider the Bible's definition of the heart and disposition of mankind.

"For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not," Ecclesiastes 7:20.

"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not," Romans 7:18.

"Because the carnal (fleshly, natural) mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be," Romans 8:7.

"For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would," Galatians 5:17.

Man, having such a spiritual nature, cannot but be offended when he is told what he is. That is the reason for the anger of the religious leaders at the preaching and actions of Christ. They were not merely 'offended' but they sought to kill Him!

"And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day," John 5:16.



The Burning Bush - Online article archive

Of course, their enmity eventually resulted in His crucifixion at Calvary. However, man's hatred of Christ was without cause or reason. "But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause," John 15:25.

Men's hatred of the TRUTH of GOD today and the allegations of racism and all the other abusive terms that are employed (to the terror of the vote-counting politicians and men-pleasers) are equally without cause or foundation!

Past

What the wicked men of that generation did to the Saviour, previous generations had done to the servants of God.

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!" Luke 13:34.

"Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers," Acts 7:52.

Future

Furthermore, the blessed Saviour told His servants to expect like treatment throughout this age.

"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." Matthew 5:11-12.

"Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city," Matthew 23:34.

Such is man's reaction still to the message of God. The message of Christ is rejected, the servant of Christ is abused, intimidated and if he remains faithful to Christ and His truth, he will be persecuted and may well be done to death!

So warned the Lord Jesus:

"If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me." John 15:18-21.

Christ's Return

Let Christians take heed that the opposition of men to the gospel and the vacillation of politicians, especially those who profess faith in Christ, in standing against such opposition, will grow worse as the return of Christ draws near.

Remember the words of the Saviour to His Church.

"For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened," Matthew 24:21-22.



The Burning Bush - Online article archive

"Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh," James 5:8.

"But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer," 1 Peter 4:7.

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