

and authors who only a few years ago would have been seen as errant in their teaching. Those who *do* have a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures *must* be bold and “...earnestly contend for the faith...” (Jude 1:3) even in the face of ridicule, name calling and labeling.

*“Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.” (II Timothy 3:12-17 NASB)*

Some final thoughts before we leave this subject — whether or not you accept everything we have written in the last three issues as correct, it is the *basis* for what is occurring in *many* congregations around the world. In these articles we chose to use the term ***New Tolerance*** but an alert ear will hear the *same* ideas included in such designations as “Postmodernism,” “Inclusiveness,” “Unity, Not Uniformity” “The Inclusive Arms of God” and various other terms and phrases that *hide* the ultimate goals of those who have bought into the same mindset. If you take the position that we are overly concerned about things that may not really matter and have little to do with today’s church, we say “wait and see.” If you’re right, we thank God that we are wrong. But if you think there is a shred of truth in what our research and personal experience on this subject has revealed, we believe it is one of *the most dangerous* changes to occur in modern times. Brethren, it cannot be ignored as a passing phase.

*“So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us. Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace, comfort and strengthen your hearts in every good work and word.” (II Thess. 2:15-17 NASB)*

May God bless each of us in our pursuit to live as He would have us to do.

— Reference materials used for these issues are available upon request —

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# DILIGENCE

*“We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure.” — Hebrews 6:11*

A ministry of Dennis and Sherri Owens

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## “It Will Never Influence My Church!”

The advantage belongs to the Devil when Christians falsely assume that ***New Tolerance*** is having no influence on their own congregation. It is naive to believe for one moment that the Devil does not have a hand in all of the confusion being brought on by the “new ways” of interpreting the Scriptures. Blurring the understanding of many long held truths enables the Devil’s efforts to accelerate by causing doubt to infiltrate the minds of Christians.

Remember that the ***New Tolerance*** mindset must diminish Absolute Truth. Absolute Truth means that something is true for *every* person, *all* the time, and *everywhere*. Since God cannot lie (Titus 1:2), we can be *certain* (and must be convicted) that *every* word in the *Inspired* Word of God *is* Absolutely True. But let’s look at what Truth is *not*. Truth is *not* whatever works, without consulting the Word of God. Believing that if it works, it *must* be good is a flawed belief. Neither is truth whatever *feels* good. This view asserts that anything that feels good *must* be true, and anything that feels bad must be in error. Anyone who has ever received bad news knows that the bad news doesn’t feel good, even though it’s true. Truth is also not found in sincerity. An atheist can believe with all sincerity that there is no God. His sincerity however, has nothing to do with truth. Many times, sincere people can be sincerely wrong.

Those who buy into ***New Tolerance*** profess and take pride in stating that they are open-minded. However in reality, their position is one of the *most* closed minded positions of all. Why? While loudly professing how open-minded they are, most Absolute Truths are eliminated as a possibility. An *open* minded person would be willing to consider that *every* word in the Scriptures is Absolutely True — not *just* that Jesus is the Son of God and that we are commanded to love God and our neighbor.

It cannot be over emphasized that it is *essential to drastically reduce* the number of Truths that are believed to be Absolute in order for the ***New Tolerance*** mindset to infiltrate a congregation. For example, let’s look at a few practices and beliefs that have long been held as foundational and

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undisputable within the church, but are now portrayed by the *New Tolerance* crowd as nothing more than archaic *traditions* created by mere men and are thus subject to society, culture and mortal man.

- *Dependence on the Bible as the sole and exclusive source as the reliable text* — Today many uninspired writers such as Justin Martyr, Thomas Merton, John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila are given near equal credibility with the Bible.
- *Biblical patterns are contained in God's Word* — Biblical patterns are now portrayed as false interpretations propagated by men whose goal was to maintain control. A precise example of this are the numerous assertions now presented against God's specific intent for male leadership in the home and in the church.
- *In depth Bible study* — Those who use the Bible to identify *why* some newly introduced practice or belief is not correct, will be called Bible Police, Pharisee, Legalist or some similar term. Only a most determined person will continue in light of such vicious verbal attacks.
- *Bible knowledge* — Christians should always strive to attain knowledge of the Word but that becomes a *disadvantage* for compatibility with the direction of *New Tolerance*. Since it's impossible to Scripturally justify some of the changes, it becomes increasingly difficult to study the Word and remain silent in the pew. The unfortunate choice for many is to simply stop studying and accept whatever they are told by church leaders rather than be subjected to the ridicule that results from doing otherwise. Members in congregations caught up in *New Tolerance* are encouraged to place faith and confidence in leaders and various authors rather than in their *own* knowledge of the Word. There's always someone more educated than myself so why not just rely on what "they" have concluded to be correct? After all they must know the truth. It's their job to know. Those who object to new "ideas" or "interpretations" of the Bible are told that *without* employing various practices present in *other* churches it will be impossible to attract and subsequently bring people to Christ. Who would be willing to accept that burden?
- *Baptism is essential for salvation* — The "new way" claims that salvation no longer comes through baptism, but rather baptism is the initial step of obedience *after* salvation.
- *The Scriptures supply us with an outline as to the manner in which the church should be organized* — Deviating from this particular foundational belief was mentioned in the previous issue of *Diligence*.

*whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you" (Jude 1:3 NIV)*

### **Step Six** — Change in the songs

New songs are introduced and sung in the assembly with lyrics that teach messages that are not Scripturally sound but instead train the mind to accept false understanding about God the Father, Christ and the Holy Spirit. It has been known for years that music is an effective tool to break down resistance to rejection of new thoughts. New concepts are introduced in songs while the mind is *not evaluating the truth* of the message as much as the beauty of the sound. One would be considered narrow minded to protest the use of a song in services because of lyrics, so we blindly (or perhaps reluctantly) accept and sing whatever is placed on screens before us. However, careful evaluation of the messages of some of the "new" songs reveal such unscriptural themes as "direct operation of the Holy Spirit," "saved by grace only," "pre-millennialism," "the impossibility of apostasy," and "Pentecostalism." Although we don't have room here for a detailed discussion, the way in which *songs* are used in the transition to a completely new belief agenda is astounding.

*"Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong."  
(I Corinthians. 16:13 NASB)*

### **Step Seven** — Dealing with resistance to change

In churches of every stripe there are numerous items that have become a part of worship and service. Just as God's people have always looked at the greener pasture, so it is today. Some are never satisfied to simply be secure in Christ and seek to share that peace with others. They must continually look for changes that will facilitate bigger and better congregations. Confidence in God is replaced by confidence in man's design for ~~the~~ a church. As new and different practices are introduced, a key strategy emerges. Anyone who objects to the new practices and/or beliefs is accused of being divisive. The foreign practice or teaching is defined as progressive, inclusive and open minded. While resistance to the new practices or beliefs is defined as tradition bound, legalistic and closed minded. It's obvious to see that one set of definitions is positive while the second list is negative. Since no one wants to be defined in a negative way, many people abstain from declaring their displeasure in order to avoid negative labels. Others are unfortunately oblivious to changes that, within a short time, will convert the church they loved into something they hardly even recognize. Those who may not have a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures, yet resist what they perceive to be error, are simply "re-educated" using new interpretations,

The new “interpretation” is that the Epistles are *not* a guide to be followed but are rather just an account of corruption and failures of the early Church.

While there are many other foundational beliefs of the church being challenged, we won’t take the space here to enumerate them. Let’s move on and consider some of the mechanics that are subtly being used to introduce a ***New Tolerance*** mindset into many congregations — perhaps without casual observers even being aware that their beliefs are slowly being swayed.

### ***Step One*** — Getting started.

It will all begin with the end in mind. A goal is identified. The goal will be very worthy and in line with what God would have to occur. For instance, the goal might be as simple as “Reach our Neighborhood for Christ.” This is certainly a worthy goal of which *all* Christians will be in favor. *No* one would object to *that*!

*“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you...” (Matt. 28:19 & 20 KJV)*

### ***Step Two*** — Gather Information

The next step is how? A discussion comes about which involves what has happened throughout history and some of the things that worked and some of the things that haven’t worked. In the course of the discussion we begin to compare ourselves with other groups or denominations and notice that in the same time period *they* grew in numbers while *we* stayed the same size. Our conclusion is that they *must* have done something right and we need to identify the cause of *their* success.

*“For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.” (II Corinthians. 10:12 KJV)*

### ***Step Three*** — Evaluation

Upon investigating, we immediately see that there are a number of practices and beliefs held by these very *large* churches that are *different* than ours. If we’re going to adopt their model for growth we’ll *have* to bring some of those practices and beliefs into *our* church to be as successful as they have seemingly been. The problem is that for many years our church has held that these practices and beliefs were neither appropriate nor Biblically sound.

*“But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other*

*than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!” (Galatians. 1:8 NIV)*

### ***Step Four*** — Change

We now recognize that we must change if we’re going to adopt the models of other churches that have experienced growth. This is where the temperature of the water begins to slowly rise. (Remember the frog in the pan of water from the previous issue?) The goal is now becoming more important than adhering to the truth. Compromise is the lubricant of change.

*“For, all men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the Word of the Lord stands forever. And this is the word that was preached to you.”*

*(I Peter 1:24-25 NIV)*

### ***Step Five*** — “Loving” some out of the fellowship

The question is how can these changes be made and alienate as few people as possible and at the same time attain the growth in numbers that is desired? The solution is to change things incrementally — (the frog in the pan of water story again). This allows each change to either be absorbed or be “written off” as a *one time only* event before a new one is introduced. If anyone questions these *small* changes they are charged with overreacting and *opposed* to “Reaching our Neighborhood for Christ.” During this phase the ultimate destination (remember the scientists who had a goal other than the one stated?) can be denied while still remaining firmly intact. (Also remember from the previous issue that dishonesty is a necessary part of the process?) It is a fact that until the ultimate goal has been fully implemented, *denial* of its existence can be maintained. “Love” is *publicly* displayed and frequently spoken of, but in the war room of change, the number of Absolute Truths contained in the Scriptures remains the *enemy*. Those Truths must be drastically reduced or neutralized by whatever means possible. Otherwise, they will “get in the way” of progress toward the ultimate goal of accepting *numerous* practices and beliefs that have long been held as unscriptural. Individuals who become vocal or unhappy because of being forced to accept these unscriptural practices and beliefs are called “divisive” and told to “get with it” or “get gone.” *That* is the *mark* of ***New Tolerance*** in action! It is now manifested through “love(?)” that is demonstrated by eradicating any opposition to the efforts being made to neutralize *all* but three Absolute Truths — Jesus is the Son of God, love God and love your neighbor.

*“Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints. For certain men*