

Preserving our Authenticity and Effectiveness



During our times together, we've discussed some concepts and possibilities that are not common in denominational Christianity. These 'private' discussions have been very inspiring, and have even created on-ramps into impacting encounters. But many of those discussions may not be appropriate for the larger public audience. I feel the need to be careful with what we say and to whom we say it. Let me explain.

As maturing sons and daughters, we're being given greater revelation, understanding and liberties. After a few deep and intimate encounters, we may feel that we pretty much have this "unfathomable" God (Eph 2:4, Rms 11:33), all figured out. If we're not careful we may assume that we know His heart, mind and ways... and then we box him up with wrapping paper, put a tidy little bow on it and we call that pretty package – 'G-O-D'. Then we present that pretty package to our friends as the new definition of God. I like what Bobby Conner says about this:

"We've become far too familiar with a God we barely know." – Bobby Conner

Establishing beliefs and convictions

So how do we develop solid beliefs and convictions? For ideas to become convictions and doctrine, it requires much processing, which includes, among other things; 1) **corroboration with the larger body of Scripture**, 2) the **passage of time** and 3) being **tested by the scrutiny** of opposing views.

We're mindful that one Scriptural extreme cannot cancel out an opposite extreme in Scripture. They must both be true and harmonious... even if we don't know how they are harmonious at this time. If our finite mind can't make it fit rationally, then we'll have to be alright with MYSTERY, for the time being. And if something is in the mystery category, then we must hold that idea, loosely.

So, it's imperative that we ground ourselves solidly upon the 1) **written Word**, the 2) **Spirit of the Word** and 3) **Holy Spirit**. If we don't, we open ourselves up to:

1. The slippery slope that I think most universalists started out with
2. 'Doing violence' to other Scriptures which may not support our new narrative
3. Getting branded as heretics... getting disfellowshipped... and needlessly dividing the body of Christ

Unity in the body of Christ

I am not fearful of what others think of us, as much as I am concerned of what Heaven thinks of needless division in the body of Christ. We have a pretty strong admonition here in Ephesians.

*"with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, **strive to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace**. There is **1) one body** and **2) one Spirit**, just as you were called in **3) one hope** of your calling; **4) one Lord**, **5) one faith**, **6) one baptism**; **7) one God and Father of all**, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." - Eph 4:2-6*

Paul lists **seven 'ones'** which are common denominators for all believers. And God says "**STRIVE to keep the UNITY of the Spirit in the bond of peace**". The following is a simple template to help when considering what to say and to whom to say it.

Three Venues of Proclamation

Categories of subjects and the places to share them

We'll assume that all topics shared **are found in the Word of God...** or at least, are **in keeping with the Spirit of the Word**

<p>1. To general public (to anyone and everyone) (to any maturity level) Encouraged to SHARE Scripture alone Time tested / dogma approved Scriptural stories and principles</p>	<p>2. In your 'living room' (your like-minded circle of friends) (to the maturing) OK to SHARE Edgy personal testimonies 'Paint' Scripture with extra 'color' Conjecture / personal interpretation</p>	<p>3. In your 'bedroom' (your trusted few confidants) (to the tested and seasoned) Cautiously SHARE Extra-biblical New insights not in the Bible Revelations of 'higher learning'</p>
---	--	---

Greater responsibility

In the past, when Christians shared commonly held views, we didn't need much of a 'guardrail system' to determine what things should or should not be shared. But here's a quote that will likely become much more important as we discover and walk into exciting new Heavenly freedoms.

"With greater liberty comes greater responsibility"

- 1) Responsibility over what we voice
- 2) to whom we voice it
- 3) what we present as doctrine **versus** personal experiences... or just rambling thoughts and possibilities.

Sum it up

ALC does **not require** for everyone to agree on doctrines and revelations which are **NOT essential to the core of the Gospel**. Our **private beliefs in peripheral doctrines** and our PRIVATE sharing can have **lots of latitude**. But you may want to consider the above graphic before you share our exciting fresh rhemas and encounters, because we want to preserve our reputation and effectiveness in the larger body of Christ **for as long as possible**.

It's so fun growing together with you,

-- MLH