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Christian Fanaticism

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What is the difference in Fanaticism and Christian courage, loyalty, firmness, steadfastness or unbending, unyielding and an inflexible adherence to the TRUE Christian faith? (A study in degrees.) I Pet. 3:15.

FANATICISM: "too great zeal, excessive enthusiasm, or hyper-exuberance."

COMPARE: I Cor. 15:58. I Thess. 5:21.

CONCLUSION: Faith in and fidelity to God and His will is simple loyalty to the Christian but often is taken as FANATICISM by an unbelieving and unfaithful world out there!

I. SOME UNCHANGING ELEMENTS IN THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.

1. The truth is ONE and never changes.
2. The Plan of Sal. is simple and never changes. E-R-C-B. R-P.
3. The Organization of the church is static and must never be altered. E-D-P-T-Members
4. The Worship of the church is fixed and cannot be deleted nor added to.
5. The Mission of the church will always remain the same. Matt. 28:18-20. E & E.

Note: Some of our friends and neighbors feel that we are FANATICS simply because we will NOT BEND, BREAK or CHANGE God's unchangeable ways -- we follow. We cannot!!

II. GOD'S EARLY LEADERS PLEASED THE FATHER WITHOUT FANATICISM.

A. Quote: "He who governs should possess energy without fanaticism, principles without demagoguery, severity without cruelty. He must neither be weak nor vacillating, nor, must he be ashamed of his duty." (Napoleon Bonaparte.)

B. PAUL WAS NOT ASHAMED OF HIS DUTY.
C. Quote: "The test of tolerance comes when we are in a majority. The test of COURAGE comes when we are in a minority."

D. PETER & JOHN SHOWED GREAT COURAGE WHEN IN THE MINORITY.
   Not fanatics; just deeply devoted to God.

E. Quote: "Great occasions do not make heroes or cowards; they simply unveil them to the eyes of men. Silently and relentlessly, as we wake or sleep, we grow strong or we grow weak, and at last, some CRISIS shows what we have become." B.F. Westcott.

F. APOSTLES SHOWED STRENGTH IN THEIR CRISIS.
2. Were only: persistent, truthful and courageous in spite of all opposition.

INV: Quote: "A nation is strong or weak; it thrives or perishes upon what it BELIEVES TO BE TRUE! If our YOUTH is rightly instructed in the faith of our fathers; in the traditions of our country; in the dignity of each individual man, THEN our power will be STRONGER than any weapon of destruction that man can devise."
   (Herbert Hoover, at 80th birthday.)

Christians stand FIRM by the Gospel because that is the only way a SOUL can be saved.
II Cor. 5:10-11. God IS going to keep His word!

It is FAITH, HOPE & LOVE which makes Christians do the things they do--in spite of adversity, opposition or rebuff.

JESUS invites the lost to salvation TONIGHT.
Mk. 16:15-16.

GOD invites the prodigal son or daughter to come home. Jas. 5:16.

You are invited to identify with us also.
Word: Fanaticism usually associated with bad company----bigotry, intolerance, narrow-mindedness, prejudice and off-balance people.

Definition: Excessive enthusiasm, hyper-zealousness, frantic in exuberance, super-abundant spirit, excessive effusiveness or profusely lavish.

Confused with fervor, zeal, devotion, righteousness, indignation and persistence.

Exercises: Young Christian boy: faithful to all services of the church. Enters into class discussions encourages other youth to come. Backs and pushes all youth activities. Refuses to enter into youthful foolishness and lusts. Tries to keep others from doing foolish things.

Faithful? Fanatic? Over-zealous? Dedicated?

Christian Family: faithful and regular to all services. Attends all EXTRA opportunities, meetings, chorus; special classes, home devotions, attend sister's congregation's gospel meetings occasionally, change schedule to permit youth to make youth activities.

Faithful? Fanatic? Over-zealous? Dedicated?

Salesmen: takes 8 calls to make the sale.

Fanatic? Persistent? Dedicated? Successful?

Real unusual case: East End Lions Club member:

District of liquid soaps for cleaning and lubricating wanted American Can Company account on Holcomb Blvd. Each Mon. first call. Left card. Did for 50 weeks 51st week invited in. Given account.

Fanatic? Persistent? off-balance? Successful?

Another real unusual case: Uncle Albin, Eldorado, Ark. Threatened if came back. Throw off porch. Returned. Thrown off porch! Man a fellow leader!!

Excessive persistence? Fanatic? Successful?

PRINCIPLE: Extra-ordinary RESULTS does not come with ordinary zeal, enthusiasm, and effort.

OBSERVATION: Zealous teachers of error will have more success in their mission than laicaisacal teachers of truth.

III. On-fire Communists do more than satisfy.
I. JESUS UNDOUBTEDLY CALLED A FANATIC.
1. John 2:13-16. Scourge. Make not house... Ps. 69:9 Zeal is intense feeling or passion.

II. PETER AND JOHN CONSIDERED REL. FANATICS.
2. Arrested for preaching ress. 4:13. (5,000). 4
4. Church grew more. 5:14-16. Re-arrested. 17
5. Angd releases them. 5:19-22. Teach Christ.
6. 3rd arrest. 5:26-28. Peter fearless. v.29
7. Jews warned again. 40. FANATICS?? 41-42.

III. APOSTLES ACCUSED OF TURNING WORLD UPSIDE DOWN.
   Apostles called: Fanatics, trouble-makers
   unbelievers and insurrectionists.
   Were: "Christian" fanatics; persistent, successful.

IV. PAUL ACCUSED OF BEING RELIGIOUS FANATIC, "MAD"
2. Paul put the King in the boat with himself. 25-29. Challenged king to call him fanatic!!!
3. Verdict: Paul is sane, sensible, devoted and innocent. v. 30-32.

QUESTIONS AND OBSERVATIONS:
1. Are Christians today PERSISTENT ENOUGH????
2. Do Christians today PERSUADE too little?
   II C. 5:10-11.
3. Too TIMID, lest appear to PRESS too hard?
4. Should we pray earnestly for BALANCE???
   Also, zeal, enthusiasm, persistence & love.

Command to you:
Thornley Hoch, Deacon at West Berry in Houston.
Mining engineer. Very intelligent. Started
studying. He had enough. Kpt going!(wife guided)
Reached truth. Backed off. He came ahead. GLAD!!!!

UB: Glad tonight if YOU obey Christ's Gospel?
    Be glad if rededicate life--if it needs it?
    Identify???