

The Cost of Contending

Jan Markell, for **Olive Tree Ministries, Inc.**

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Last weekend on my radio program, "Understanding the Times," I dealt with the topic of contending for the faith. I had three guests: Pastor Bob DeWaay and two who had "contended" and run into some bumpy roads. The two-hour program is posted at "Radio Archives" (<http://www.olivetreeviews.org/radio/mp3/>) for January 26. There is a cost to contending for the faith; one will never win a popularity contest.

Why is it necessary today? Because false theologies and teachers with skewed theology are so admired! Just visit a Christian bookstore. Which authors are prominently featured? Most likely those with the weakest or most incorrect theology. Why? Because publishing houses know they will be the big sellers! I should know. I have been in book publishing a number of years but in the last 10 to 12 years I have had to conclude that major publishing houses will not accept a manuscript of mine in the 21st century. Twenty years ago they took one after another.

What has happened in the last 20 years is like the frog in the kettle. Wolves in sheep's clothing have slowly crept into the church. Bad theology worsened but little by little. Because it didn't happen overnight, many did not notice. Soon, they adjusted to the "new ways of doing church," be it "seeker-sensitive," Emergent, etc.

Church leaders "widened the door." In other words, they furthered the issue with weak preaching and targeting the unsaved rather than feeding true believers eager to grow.

Church members began to speak up but what happened? I have heard of the many who were lectured, asked to leave, called troublemakers and divisive. Unity has become all-important. But how can true believers be united around false or weak preaching and teaching? Solid Christians are being told that they must be tolerant for the sake of unity.

Yes, the Bible told us a day was coming when people would not give heed to sound doctrine (***II Timothy 2:3, 4***). People would want their ears tickled. New ways of doing church today do just that. But following the biblical example, Paul still told Timothy to "***preach the Word***," and not "***tickle the ears***."

I have been following denominational annual meetings for several years and our once-solid denominations now feature some speakers who will lead their

members astray. The churches may be intrigued with the Emergent Church or Emergent-friendly speakers, but they are wolves in sheep's clothing who will do harm to the sheep. What is blinding our shepherds? Perhaps too much interest in church growth.

This is one of the battles of the ages, and yet you will likely be told that "tolerance" is a virtue and "contending" is a vice. One of my radio guests this past weekend was told that her church did not observe the Lord's Supper as the blood was offensive to "seekers." One has to ask, are these churches more worried about what man thinks than what God thinks? The answer is yes. As stated earlier, false doctrine is lucrative and telling people what they want to hear is lucrative.

While it may be a tough road, God will always honor a love for the truth and your "contending." To keep silent when such things are going on today is not an option. Eternity may be at stake for some. If you have a passion for the truth and for contending for it, others who are like-minded will come into your life. You are not asked to go on this journey alone. If you do nothing, you are helping the enemy. If you remain silent, you allow the spiritual destruction to continue.

I am asking you to be a part of a solution and not just be a part of discussing the problem. Will you count the cost of contending and go for it? You will some day be held accountable for what you choose to do.

LIVE RADIO THIS WEEKEND: I am joined by Warren Smith discussing the global push for the occultic "*A Course in Miracles*" and other discernment issues, and by White House correspondent Bill Koenig who accompanied President Bush on his Mideast visit. We air in these cities. For podcasting, check here. All programming is posted to our "Radio Archives" by late Monday. We air live Saturdays, 9 to 11 AM CST with a rebroadcast Sunday, 12 to 2 PM on AM980 KKMS, Minneapolis/St. Paul. You can always listen live at their Web site.