

# GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)


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## CONTROVERSIES

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ebster defines the word “controversy” as: *a discussion marked especially by the expression of opposing views, or a dispute.*

The history of the church of Christ in the United States, starting with the Restoration Movement has been about controversy and dispute. In the early 1800’s, when Thomas and Alexander Campbell, in step with Barton W. Stone, independently reached similar conclusions about the Presbyterian Church in their prospective areas, they split from those institutions. They wrote their “Declaration and Address”, and “The Last Will Testament of the Springfield Presbytery” and entered into a controversy.

What was the cause for such turmoil? They simply attempted to return to the Bible as the inspired word of God, and the only instrument needed to guide Christians in their everyday lives. By actually applying this principle, instead of giving mere lip service to it, the results put them in conflict with the religious practices of the day.

In our day, the controversies we experience with current religious thought come generally from man’s effort to create a more convenient, a more mainstream, a more modernized, and a more palatable type of religion. We need to remember Mark 8:33 and 34, where it is said: *Jesus rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind Me, Satan; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's." And He summoned the crowd with His disciples, and said to them, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.*

While issues continue to surface, such as the reinterpretation of words and passages from the Bible, biblical deviations needing to be “worth considering” and having our “possibilities” and “horizons” broadened, there needs to be a continued understanding of terms like misapplication and misinterpretation.

We read in 1 Timothy 3:14 to 16 *These things I write unto you, hoping to come unto you shortly; but if I tarry long, that you may know how men ought to behave themselves in the house of God, which*

*is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness; He who was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the spirit, Seen of angels, Preached among the nations, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory.*

God inspired the writers of the Bible ensuring all who would read it would be able to understand, and then would have the opportunity to apply it to their lives. Paul reminds us regarding the revealed mystery: *“...whereby when ye read, ye can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ” (Eph. 3:4) He exhorts us all to “understand what the will of the Lord is” (Eph. 5:17).*

So, when we hear the word “controversy” being bantered about, rather than shy away from the issues, we should study with due diligence so we can defend the cause of Christ. Controversies should bolster our resolve to continue applying the first principal’s taught in the New Testament, thus being truly the church of Christ.