

Religion in America

Church Heads Discuss Purging Members for Lack of Discipline

BY LOUIS CASSELS
UPI Correspondent

Should churches purge their membership rolls of people whose lives flagrantly contradict the teachings of Christ?

That question is under serious debate in church circles for the first time in more than a generation.

One of the church leaders who raised the question is Prof. Franklin H. Littell of Chicago Theological Seminary. He told a recent church conference that major Protestant denominations have virtually abandoned membership standards and are "incapable of maintaining the most elementary internal discipline."

He said that lack of discipline makes it impossible for churches to play an effective role in the struggle for racial justice. Nearly every denomination has condemned racial discrimination as un-Christian, he pointed out. But, he asked, how often do you hear of a Protestant church expelling a member for preaching or practicing bigotry?

Excommunication Rare

Even in the Roman Catholic Church, which theoretically has stricter standards of internal discipline, excommunication for disobedience of moral teachings is comparatively rare nowadays. Witness the nationwide sensation which resulted last year when the archbishop of New Orleans denied the sacraments to three people who had openly challenged the church's stand on

integration of parochial schools.

But the breakdown of church discipline is not confined to such fields as race relations, where there are strongly held differences of opinion.

Prof. Glenn Hinson of the Southern Baptist Seminary at Louisville, Ky., observed recently that churches are not even cracking down on such blatant acts of immorality as adultery and drunkenness.

Hinson said many Christians today seem to feel that there is some thing "distasteful, almost uncivilized" about telling people they must live up to the church's moral standards or get out.

Writing in the Texas Baptist Standard, Hinson noted the same tenacity to look the other way existed in the early Christian church at Corinth.

Writes Blistering Letter
St. Paul found out about it, and wrote a blistering letter

to the Corinthians about the maintenance of church discipline.

"I actually hear reports of sexual immorality among you," said the shocked apostle.

He proceeded to lay down stern rules for "rooting out evil-doers from your community."

"Have you never heard the saying, 'A little leaven leavens all the rough?' The old leaven of corruption is working among you. Purge it out . . .

"You must have nothing to do with any so-called Christian who leads a loose life, or is grasping, or idolatrous, a slanderer, a drunkard, or a swindler."

St. Paul made clear that he was not advocating the church turn its back on sinners outside its fold. To do that would be to abandon its whole mission, for Christ said repeatedly that it was precisely for sinners that He came and died.

It was nominal Christians—hypocrites who claim the name of Christ while making a mockery of his teaching—that St. Paul said were to be "rooted out" of the church. And even in their case, the withdrawal of fellowship was not to be a vindictive act. It was the same kind of punishment that a loving parent administers to an erring child, to bring him to his senses. St. Paul specified that any church

member who was expelled for wrong-doing should be welcomed back with open arms if he sincerely repented and sought forgiveness.

with people who are not even trying to be Christians.

needed," said Prof. Hinson. "The question is: Dare we take the risk?"



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Big Talk Easier With New Set of Science Prefixes

By JOSEPH L. MYLER
United Press International

Washington—It's getting easier to talk big and think small.

All you need is a set of prefixes recently endorsed by the International Union of Pure and Applied Physics.

With these prefixes you can discourse unimpairedly upon the microcosm and the macrocosm.

With their help you can converse easily, and with great economy of words, signs and symbols, about such things as 89-gigabuck federal budgets and the femtosecond lifetimes of mesons.

They will save you the trouble of trying to utter almost unutterable fractions, such as "one million-billionth." They also will clear your mind's eye on the billious spectacle of multitudinous zeros—spots with holes in them—crawling monotonously across a page.

New Prefix List

The new list retains the old prefixes deci-, centi-, and milli- meaning 10th, 100th, and 1,000th. Then there is the more or less familiar micro-, standing for millionth.

Progressing more deeply into the world of the small you encounter nano-, billionth; pico-, million-billionth; femto-, million-billionth; and atto-, billion-billionth.

An attosecond, in this glossary, would be a billion-billionth of a second. There may be some strange nuclear particles which grow old in that period of time.

Climbing out of the fractional world you find such old friends as kilo-, for thousand, and mega- for million as in kilowatt and megawatt. Beyond mega- is giga-, for billion, and tera- for million-million.

Megaton Rated

The A-bomb which destroyed Hiroshima was equivalent to nearly 20 kilotons of TNT. The 500 times more powerful H-bomb is a megaton weapon, and there has been perhaps fanciful talk of a gigaton dooms-day device.

The slaughter of which these weapons are capable ranges at least theoretically from kilodeaths through megadeaths to gigadeaths. So far no one has thought up a teraton weapon capable of reaping teradeaths.

Yet To Expand

Similarly federal budgets have yet to expand 1,000 times from the gigabuck to the terabuck category, although the needful prefix is ready and waiting.

Sooner or later the new jargon is bound to invade show business. Then you can expect giggagiggle comedies and teratearful dramas of love and passion.

Some of them will cost megabucks to make and will be worth all of a plugged nanonickel to see.

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