

PLAIN SPEECH

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“Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech” (2 Cor. 3:12)

By Scott Parker

NEW YORK MAKES THOSE DECISIONS

Three Mondays ago I was in a Barnes & Noble bookstore. By chance I saw a brightly covered book entitled: **Girl Stuff: A Survival Guide to Growing Up** written by three women. I thought, *“I wonder just what they are teaching girls?!”* I grabbed the book and spied the table of contents. One chapter was devoted to, **“Everything you never wanted anyone to know you wanted to know about sex.”** I turned to the page noted and read a few lines and stopped reading.

What had filtered through my eyes and brain was repugnant and shameful. The content read like a smut letter. Sadly, the book not only was encouraging teen sexual encounters, but was explaining to young girls how to go about such.

I was bursting with righteous indignation (**Romans 12:9**). I turned to the brother that was with me and said, **“Bro, we live in a godless world.”** He said (slightly nodding his head, yet not taking his eyes off the book he was skimming) **“Yes we do. Are you just figuring that out?”** Certainly I knew then, and still know now, that **“the whole world lieth in wickedness”** (**1 John 5:19**). Yet, I was amazed that such a book was so accessible to children.

Nearby was a young lady. I called her over and asked her age (she was 19). I then showed her the cover of the book and asked: **“When you were 12, 13, 14, 15 years old, did you read books like this one?”** She said plainly, **“Yes.”** She had friends very close by so I asked all of them (each aged 18-19) the same question. All of them happily stated they had read like similar books early on in adolescence. I thanked them and they shuffled away. The righteous anger grew.

Next, I tracked down the manager on duty. I asked her to read a few lines from the book’s sex chapter. When she was finished, I asked her if she thought such was appropriate reading material for young girls. She looked stupefied. Pressing the point I asked her why Barnes & Noble would sink so low as to peddle sex to children. She still looked stunned, but now also looked nervous. Finally, I asked her why parents do not have to sign a permission slip in order for their children to purchase such sleazy reading material. Finally, she gave an answer. Here it is. She said: **“Sir, New York makes those decisions.”** She was referring to the Corporate Division of the company located at 122 Fifth Avenue.

Now was her answer fantastic, or what? Selling sex tips to teens is okay all because some suits in midtown Manhattan say so. Incredible! Pitiful! Disgusting! What I hoped she would say was something like, **“You’re right sir, this is horrible. I will look into this carefully.”** But alas, all I heard was: **“Sir, New York makes those decisions.”**

Now here is the point. Doesn’t that manager’s attitude mirror that of many members (so called) of the church? Note:

- ✦ Joe Goodspeaker, who shies away from **2 Cor. 10:5; 2 Tim. 4:1-5; 2 Pet. 3:15; et al.** is asked to show authority for a church of Christ community blood drive. His answer? I quote: **“The elders here have made that decision.”**
- ✦ A young preacher leaves the sins of institutionalism behind. He receives word from the president of an unscriptural human institution. The message is: **“If you were truly, honestly, seeking the truth, you would have traveled down and visited with Roy Lanier, Jr. (in Lakeland, Florida), who has spent his life answering the arguments given by the non-institution side. But, sadly, amazingly, you have not done this.”**
- ✦ A person “raised in the church” (Ashdod) is asked about his/her view on a passage. The best they can offer is, **“That’s what the staff writers for Truth Magazine say.”**

You see, there’s no difference between the manager and those who say the types of things as noted above. All of them foolishly attempt to deny accountability for the things they are engaged in; i.e. the manager for exchanging lewd books for cash, and the blind church members for teaching and practicing things without scriptural authority (**Colossians 3:17**).

More and more I reflect on **Luke 18:8**, **“...when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?”**

Many are going to be surprised to find out too late that they will be held accountable (**Matthew 7:21-23**).

How sad. How sad indeed.