

"sound doctrine" (Titus 1:9). Rubel Shelly stated during the Freed-Hardeman lectures in 1970,

⇒ "But it now seems that we have developed 'a new breed of preachers' who can show only contempt and disgust for what faithful brethren have said and done in the past. These same men are speaking and writing in such a way as to create doubt and confusion in the minds of our brethren. We must not be silent while this is going on around us. We must run the risk of being labelled as 'witch hunters' or 'keepers of orthodoxy' in order to obey the Biblical command to 'prove the spirits, whether they are of God' (I John 4:1)" (*Freed-Hardeman Lectures*, 1970, page 37).

Brethren, brother Shelly has in this described what he has become. He now himself shows contempt "for what faithful brethren have said and done in the past" and writes and speaks so "as to create doubt and confusion in the minds of our brethren." To use his own words he has now been brainwashed. He wrote in *Liberalism's Threat To The Faith*,

◆ "We are being asked to believe that strong doctrinal presentations do more harm than good. We are being brainwashed into shying away from controversies and debates" (page 12).

He now refuses to defend any of his present teachings on the polemic platform. It just might be that Rubel realizes that his present positions and teachings simply cannot stand the test of examination and debate.

Let me set before you some statements made by Rubel Shelly in the Jubilee in Nashville, July, 1991.

◆ "I want to talk with you about the relationship between the church and the kingdom of God. The thesis of this speech is going to be that the church is a body of redeemed people in pursuit of an ideal which the New Testament calls the kingdom of God, or alternately the kingdom of heaven. I'm going to insist that the two do not have an identity relationship. That it is theologically incorrect to say church equals kingdom ... we have been taught, many of us at least, that they have a relationship of identity that wherever the church is the kingdom of God is. Everything that speaks of the

kingdom of God is somehow a description of the church."

Later in this same speech he stated,

• "And our notion of restoration should not be conceived, and Biblically cannot be conceived, as recapturing something that was once in place The Church is not a static accomplishment, complete on Pentecost and maybe for 50 to 100 years then some great apostasy and the goal is the recapturing of whatever it was there briefly. The church, even on Pentecost, was not where God ideally wanted people to be, because the church never arrives ... the church is never a perfect revelation of God's ideal. Never has been at any time in its history, and certainly isn't today. But, it always strives to move toward that ideal which is expressed in the Bible by the term 'kingdom of God.'"

According to these statements made by Rubel "it is theologically incorrect to say church equals kingdom" and that we, at least many of us, have been erroneously taught that the church and kingdom "have a relationship of identity." Rubel needs to read the Bible again and stop relying on sectarian theologians like **Hans Kung** and others. When the Bible speaks of God's people on earth during the dispensation of Christ, the terms church and kingdom are used interchangeably! Notice these passages: Matthew 16:18-19; Colossians 1: 13, 18; Hebrews 12:23, 28; Revelation 1: 4, 9. Rubel once knew this to be true, but now he no longer knows the truth.

It is certainly the case that sometimes the term 'kingdom' refers to the saved in heaven. This usage is obvious from the context as in Acts 14:22; Galatians 5:21; and other places. But when the reference is to the saved on earth, the terms 'church' and 'kingdom' are used interchangeably — they "have an identity relationship." There is not a single reference to the kingdom in the New Testament as "an ideal" different and distinct from the church which is actively pursued by the redeemed but never achieved, as Rubel has

suggested. That idea of Rubel's cannot be found in the Bible!

Questions Rubel Must Answer

⇒ If the church is not the kingdom, has the kingdom been established within the lifetime of those who heard Him preach? (Mark 9:1).
⇒ Was the kingdom established in the days of those kings prophesied by Daniel in Daniel 2:44?
⇒ Exactly what is it that Jesus is going to deliver to the Father (I Cor. 15:24) if the kingdom is simply an ideal that is pursued but never attained?
⇒ What did Jesus mean when he made reference to partaking of the Lord's Supper "in my Father's kingdom" (Mat. 26:29).

Rubel said at Jubilee that "it is arrogant for us to claim to be the kingdom of God." He is blaspheming God by suggesting to us that even the church that God established on the day of Pentecost was not what God wanted!

On February 4, 1990, brother **Steve Flatt** spoke to his home congregation, at that time the Madison church, on the Sermon on the Mount and particularly on this prayer of Matthew 6. About the kingdom he had this to say, "It is not exactly accurate to call it the church." Brethren, does this sound familiar? I believe Steve has listened to Rubel too much! (By the way, Steve's sermon bears a striking resemblance to a sermon preached by Rubel at Ashwood [now known as the Woodmont Hills church] in Nashville on February 7, 1988.)

Brethren, we must wake up! We cannot fellowship such doctrines of error or those who teach them (II John 9-11). We must be watchful and alert! (Luke 18:8; Matthew 25:13).■

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HERESY
AMONG
GOD'S
PEOPLE
On
the
CHURCH/KINGDOM

Lester Kamp