

## **Not All Roads Lead to God**

Doubt and uncertainty have become a disease in the church. When you dare to say "I am certain about the gospel message," you are frowned upon and considered to be rather arrogant. "Don't you know that in our time you can only approach your congregation clothed with a deep sense of humility? How can you be so sure of your message when even local problems have become so complex, let alone world issues?"

Read the 'new' theologians. They leave you with the impression that the church must be very apologetic and very appreciative of the latest fads in secular philosophy. Scientific knowledge is increasing so rapidly that we must revise constantly our view of world and life.

Since the world has become a 'global village', we can no longer assert that the Christian faith is the only true religion. All roads lead to God, whether the road is called Christianity or Hinduism. Result? We find little spirit and even less dynamism in so much theological writing and even in preaching and witnessing.

Is this the attitude Christians must have? Let me confine myself to preaching. Humble and self forgetting, the minister should always be, but timid and apologetic about the gospel, never! Professor James Stewart has written, "It is quite mistaken to suppose that humility excludes conviction."

The apostles, disciples and evangelists of New Testament times were very humble, but they were also men of deep and burning conviction. They were no strangers to conflict and to the appeal of the many philosophies and religions of their day. They too faced a world that opposed the gospel message.

It was considered foolishness. Many believed that it would never measure up to the wisdom of the philosophers. All roads led to the gods. Paul, the apostle discovered in Athens an altar with this description, "To The Unknown God." The idea behind it? It is better to be safe, than to be sorry! You never know. We may have missed out on a god. In this world and in these difficult circumstances the gospel was preached with clarity and conviction. The gospel was not whispered but preached loudly, compassionately and fervently.

It came through ringing with the certainty of experienced truth. The central theme of each message was Jesus Christ and Him crucified, buried, raised from the dead, and as the only and true Lord of the Universe. Jesus Christ was their Lord for whom every knee must bow.

Men and women were called to be reconciled to the God of the Scriptures. We too need to be unwavering heralds of truth. Without hesitation, the church's message should be the well known, oft repeated, authoritative and dynamic - "The Bible says."

Is this sentiment not humble enough for our uncertain and relativistic times? Of course humility is a virtue. A Christian can only bring his message as a humble steward of the gospel. But G. K. Chesterton once penned some wise words about what he called "the dislocation of humility."

"What we suffer from today is humility in the wrong place. Modesty has moved from the organ of ambition. Modesty has settled upon the organ of conviction; where it was never meant to be. A man was meant to be doubtful about himself, but undoubting about the truth; this has been exactly reversed. We are on the road to producing a race of men too mentally modest to believe in the multiplication table."

Johan D. Tangelder  
May, 1973