

Your Voice #6

Love not Law

By John Noack

THE BIBLE IS MORE THAN LITERALISTIC

Readers of the Bible soon become aware that the Bible's content can be understood and interpreted in various different ways. These are given labels, ranging from conservative to liberal and friendly discussions can quickly become disputes and debates. For example, those who are claiming to have "infallible faith" in their mostly literalistic understanding of the Bible like to claim that their understanding trumps the understanding of the Bible, which is adopted by the Readers who acknowledge and accept the Bible's various wider contextual and deeper moral, poetical or figurative, parabolical or allegorical and spiritual or anagogical levels of appreciation and appropriation.

A PROMOTION OR A REPRIMAND

A text which is often quoted in relation to condemning the Ordination of Women is 1 Corinthians 14:34, which states: Let your women keep silence in the churches...they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law" (KJV). However, many Scholars now accept that the use of the term "Law" here is part of a quoted rebuke by St Paul, in response to the application of either a general Roman Law or a specific Jewish synagogue Law, which relate to the conduct of women at their Religious Gatherings.

THE LAW'S LETTER KILLS BUT ITS SPIRIT GIVES LIFE

Therefore, such a legalistic and negative application of the concept of "Law" here is an excellent example of Paul's warning in 2 Corinthians 3:6 that the letter of the Law kills compassionate conduct and relationships within religious groups. In contrast, Jesus' new covenant principle of Love, which is the underlying spirit of the Law, gives Life. I even had to memorize during my Confirmation lessons, the text in King James Version: "Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not the letter, but the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life".

LUTHERAN LOVE AND NOT LEGALISM

It would be good if all Lutheran-Christians (1) read and re-read this important statement of St Paul and (2) always seek to understand that Jesus' enacted and bestowed Love on us, and not any negative, punitive and Hell-motivated Legalism, is the real and true basis for our Christian-Lutheranism and motivation for our Christian living.

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