

BLOG AND MABLOG

Print a Mablog

The Ultimate High Ground

Topic: Moscow Diversity Cleansing

This morning I received a copy of a six-page open letter to me, as well as to the members of Christ Church. It was entitled "A Labor of Love for Pastor Douglas Wilson and Church Church." The letter was, of course, anonymous.

The central point of the letter was that the Word of God demands a life of love from the followers of Christ, which is, of course, true. This is the ultimate rhetorical high ground, and when it is faithfully applied it *ought* to be the ultimate high ground. But the central application of the letter was that I and the members of Christ Church have rejected this central biblical duty, and are living out lives that are characterized by the opposite of love. In the course of the letter I was accused of multiple sins: "Douglas Wilson is impatient and unkind; Douglas Wilson is boastful; He is arrogant and rude. His life is lived on the principle of insisting on his own way; all the while, when people cross him, acting irritable or resentful, he has "not been nice," he has "persisted in self-conceit and impudence," "Pastor Wilson, you are *not* qualified to be an elder, bishop, or presbyter," and much more along those lines.

How is the *anonymous* nature of this attack justified? "The anonymous nature of this piece is intended to keep the focus on the Scriptures, and not on the weak points of their collector. I don't want the Scriptures to be set aside by my identity, so whether I am a concerned evangelical, an embossed member from your own church or the CREC, or a Presbyterian who just wants to edify the Reformed world, it should not matter . . ."

Keep the focus on the Scriptures? I am reminded of St. Paul's initial response in front of the Sanhedrin, before he knew the identity of the high priest. "Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?" (Acts 23:3). How can we keep the focus on the Scriptures through anonymous accusations, when the Scriptures do not permit anonymous accusations? Scripture does not permit an accusation against an elder except on the testimony of two or three witnesses (1 Tim. 5: 19), witnesses who are willing to be accountable and on the record for their words. In addition to the requirement of independent verification, Deuteronomy 19 also establishes the foundational principle of justice that holds the accuser accountable for false accusations. This is because we live in a world where false witnesses exist. The ninth commandment is dedicated to the problem of dealing with false witnesses. "And the judges shall make diligent inquisition: and, behold, if the witness be a false witness, and hath testified falsely against his brother; then shall ye do unto him, as he had thought to have done unto his brother: so shalt thou put the evil away from among you" (vv. 18-19).

My anonymous accuser is quite right that we do not know who he is. But notice that among all the options he listed for his possible identity, there were none that would disqualify him as a false witness. Why did he not suggest those possible options? He is right that we don't know who he is. But he limited the options far too drastically, and we need to expand them a little. We don't know if he is a concerned evangelical or in the paid employ of the Southern Poverty Law Center. We don't know if he is a Presbyterian bent on edifying the Reformed world or a

lesbian upset over my stand on homosexual marriage. We don't know if he is a disgruntled member of our church or a card-carrying member of the secularist Intoleristas. Thirty seconds of mature reflection should identify all the salient reasons why all anonymous accusations should be immediately round filed.

The accuser wants to remain anonymous to avoid discussion of the "weak points of the collector." This is a person who reserves the right to discuss at length the "weak points" of *others*, but *his* weak points must be off the table. They would only be a distraction from the real point at issue, which apparently consists of ignoring the beams in his own eyes. But let us consider for a minute. Is it possible that his weak points might be such as to disqualify him as a witness entirely? Might his weak point be that he has never met me, and only knows what he has read in what he thought was a reliable internet forum? Might his weak point be that he was disciplined by our church for chronic unfaithfulness to his wife, and he is still bitter about it? Might his weak point be that in the controversies of the last several years, he has been the chief offender against the law of charity, and for people to know that *he* wrote these soaring words about love would produce nothing but gales of laughter? Well, we don't know, because the anonymous accuser is the one who insists that everyone *else* be accountable to Scripture as *he* understands it, but who absolutely refuses to be accountable himself.

Those who understand Scripture know what to do with anonymous accusations. But people still make anonymous accusations because, at some level, it still works with some people. There are too many Christians in the middle who do not yet understand what the Bible teaches about handling anonymous charges. And so I write for the sake of those Christians who are open to what the Bible says about this, but who have not had to work through it before.

So I am not responding to this open letter because I am "touchy" about the charges in it. Many charges are brought against me in this letter, but I am not ashamed on that account. Jesus said to rejoice and be glad when this kind of thing happens. And in line with some of the passages cited in this letter, I have asked for God's blessing, God's way, on the one who wrote all this against me. In the midst of a number of scurrilous charges, I am mentioned by name about 21 times. The accuser's name, however, is entirely hidden in the shadows. I am not ashamed of any of these words brought against me. The one who wrote them, however, is ashamed to be identified with *any* of them. So I have asked for God's blessing on this person, and one of the greatest blessings I can imagine for him is to be brought to the place where he no longer needs to be embarrassed about signing his name to what he writes.

Posted by Douglas Wilson - 6/10/2005 12:38:18 PM
