

Question: Sometimes it seems that churches major in minors and minor in majors and overlook the real issues of our lives. What would Jesus say about this?

Many churches and Christians have been guilty of majoring in minors while neglecting more important issues that people face in life. During the mid-twentieth century, churches in the south often had much to say about hairstyle, jewelry, dancing and rock music while seldom addressing racial injustice and the plight of our black brothers and sisters. In more recent years, some South African churches would not allow young Christians to chew gum, pray with their hands in their pockets or wear blue jeans because they made a person spiritually suspect. Yet, those same churches defended the injustices of racial apartheid. In the 1930's, a delegate from a large U.S. denomination visited Germany and defended Hitler as a leader who neither smoked nor drank, who wanted women to dress modestly and who opposed pornography. I grew up hearing Christians argue over how you could or could not use money from the church treasury and whether it is right to have a kitchen in the church building.

All of this is contrary to the Spirit of Jesus who said, "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices-- mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law-- justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former. You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel" (Matthew 23:23-24). Clearly, Jesus saw some things as more important than others; and he refused to waste a lot of time on those things of lesser importance.

While some Christians argue and speculate over relatively minor things—even things taught in the Bible—thousands are dying of hunger, families are breaking up and lives are being destroyed. Racial hatred and injustice continue. The number of suicides rises with the increase of depression, anxiety and fear. Christians need to be about the task of proclaiming the gospel (good news) of hope and of help in a lost and dying world. We need to be about helping people see how the teachings of Jesus relate to everyday issues of life in school, at work, in the home and in the marketplace. Discipleship means following the example of Jesus

as he served and gave his life for all of us. Thankfully, there are many Christians and churches who are trying to maintain such godly attitudes and priorities.

[Send questions or comments to University Church of Christ, 801 N. 12th, Murray, KY 42071 or phone 270-753-1881. This article is reproduced on the web: www.nchrist.org] 2012/01/27