

## ACQUIRED TASTES, REQUIRED TASTES AND AUTHORITY.

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We all have acquired tastes. Our first ones are gotten within the family. An obvious area is at the dining table. From childhood we get what we are given. Better said, We accept what we are served. So we get to know cheddar cheese in England and may never have heard of provolone while at home.

An acquired taste easily becomes a required taste. Within the context in which it has been acquired it becomes expected. That is because it is the taste of what is served here. What you get day after day you get so accustomed to that you accept it as normal.

But it is the same with conversation and ideas. As we grow as children we get used to certain topics of conversation. Regularity, repetition, leads to acceptance and endorsement. So as time passes we get so used to certain attitudes and accept particular ideas, beliefs and outlooks that they become so much a part of us that we come to take them for granted.

'This is what we do' becomes 'This is what we must do' and 'we' means 'you' because you do not have to make decisions, yet! Then there is a further step. What we do in the family is what you do as part of the family, and usually in childhood you do it naturally. But the further step is that what the family does and says, what father does and says, what mother does and says, is what you are expected to do. Should you have questions, we will tell you what you must do. So 'this is what we do' becomes 'this is what you must do, this is what is expected of you'. 'What they do' becomes 'This is what I do.'

Sometimes, if not in most cases, there is authority within the family. That means the child as it grows meets with approval and disapproval. Making clear what is expected is the first step to efforts to bring it about.

It happens in many other social units. So instead of saying 'This is what we do', put 'believe' for 'do' and see what happens. Now take the religious case. 'What we believe' becomes 'This is what we expect you believe.' Intolerant communities have their pressures and sanctions if they discover disagreement.

I have been reading a book about William Tyndale, an extraordinary virtuoso in the English language and the talented translator of the Bible. He lived in England in the sixteenth century. It is not generally known that the translators of the Authorised Version, sometimes called the King James version of the Bible simply took over ninety percent from Tyndale's translation. He was one of the shapers of the English language. He was also an energetic publisher of the Testament he had produced. But he was the object of intense hatred. The reason was simple. He did not fit in with the 'family', namely the Church of King Henry and his court, Thomas More and Wolsey in particular.

Henry was disaffected with the papacy for his personal reasons, but not from Catholic dogma, to which he was firmly attached. The breakaway Anglican church was violently opposed to Tyndale's resolute attempt to provide ordinary people with a translation of the bible in a language that could be understood by all. Tyndale had stated his aim to give the ploughboy the Word of God in a language he could understand. And so he did. He gave ordinary people the opportunity to have the Word of God in their own language, and in a

version of that language that they could readily understand. After his betrayal he was finally burned at the stake, as Wycliffe had been before him.

The root of this persecution had its source in the assertion of authority Tyndale had challenged this, for his translation meant that those who read the Bible for themselves resisted the demands of the church both in doctrine and in practice. .

‘This is what we do becomes ‘This is what we must do.’ .,That then becomes :We means you. So They can then say to me,. We are telling you what you must do and say., We will tell you what we do and then you must do. Se will then find out whether you are willing to do what we do. We believed such and such and so do such and such. So then they can tell me, so they can tell you what you must not do and say and what not believe. Then they find out if you co-operate, using whatever means are needed to get you to co-operate.

But there was a further step Tyndale’s enemies took. Indeed it was the initial one taken as an assumption. What we tell you is what God is telling you. Our authority is God’s authority and we and our system is the means by which God is now speaking. What we are telling you is what God is telling you.

Times have changed but we can see a sad repetition of the opposition in Christian communities of the conflict between an authoritarian demand for conformity and the allowance of the protestant principle that believers must find their own understanding and experience. Ironically it frequently occurs over the issue of understanding the scriptures now available to all. The very communities which inherited the benefits of the Reformation now demand an authority that insists that their interpretation of that available scripture be followed. In some conservative Christian communities the shift to discussion of correct method of interpretation even taker precedence over the actual understanding of the original text of Scripture.