

Conformists or Non-Conformists?

(Romans 12:1-2)

Edah means *witness*, so by being conformed to this world the Edah would lose its meaning, no longer able to be a witness and a foretaste of the Kingdom to come. Rom 12:1-2 — The Edah is made up of that living sacrifice of the many members of Messiah's Body who are not conformed to this world. Each and every one of its members has qualified for his entry into Messiah's Body (Jn 12:25-26; 1 Cor 12:12-13; Rom 6:2-5). Each and every day, morning and evening, at the morning and evening sacrifices which we call the *minchot*, each and every member of Messiah presents his body as a living sacrifice. Each and every member of Messiah's Body, as integral parts of His many-membered Body (1 Cor 12:12), together form one corporate sacrifice.

As Paul beseeched the Edah in Rome, "Brethren, by the compassions of Elohim, in view of His mercies, I beseech you to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to Him, which is your reasonable service..." *Reasonable* means intelligent or logical service, meaning it just does not make any sense any other way, and it cannot be any other way and still be the Body of Messiah on Planet Earth, to be the witness that it is supposed to be.

Mal 3:3 — Acceptable offerings before Him are offered by the royal priesthood of the New Covenant (1 Pet 2:9; Heb 13:15) standing in the place of the Levitical priesthood of old (1 Chr 23:30), as each member of Messiah's Body presents his own body to Him as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to Him, no longer conformed to this world, which each one has been saved out of. We are no longer conformed to its fallen religion (Acts 2:36), which Peter called them out of in Acts 2:40, and verse 41 is the only way out and the only way in — into the Body of Messiah (1 Cor 12:12-13).

So now each one of us must discern that Body, as 1 Cor 11:29 says, lest we be guilty of His blood, as all who did not repent that day in Acts 2:36-37 (Mt 27:25; 1 Cor

11:23-32). *Discern* (#1252) means with due appreciation of His suffering for us in order to form us into His Body, which acts on His behalf on Earth (to be its light, Jn 8:12; Mt 5:14). Thus we incorporate the one sacrifice of Rom 12:1-2, no longer conformed to this world.

“*Without discerning*” in 1 Cor 11:29 means to treat any one member wrongly, which is to treat our Savior Yahshua wrongly (since we are His Body). His earthly Body, which we are, must be distinguished *above all other things* by a fervent love for one another. 1 Pet 4:8 says “*Above all.*” To go into the room which has been prepared for the Breaking of Bread without discerning the Body (making the distinction in due appreciation of one another), not being in fellowship with someone — even one person — means that you are not in fellowship with the Head of the Body. You are not discerning His Body as being made up of every single member, all of which are to be in fellowship with one another. That means that *each* member loves *all* the others as Jn 13:34 in order to be Messiah’s witness on Earth (Jn 13:35), the Edah.

So above all that would hinder, above all else, cherish the love you have for one another. This love, as demonstrated in Jms 5:19-20, is loving one another as our Master loved us, being saviors to one another, washing away the dammed-up sins down Freedom River. To save someone’s soul from death is to be a savior to him, getting to that one sin, that one unconfessed sin that caused the pile-up. For the wages of sin is *still* death for us also (1 Jn 5:17; Jms 1:14,15,21; Rev 2:11; 3:5; Dan 12:2 — an age-lasting death).

Jn 8:51 — We obey His words by not sinning in the way of not loving our brother or sister enough to go to him and release him from what caused his obvious lack of grace. A discerning brother or sister will be able to see and cure someone who is guilty of 1 Cor 11:29. To ignore such a one in trouble would be to hate him (1 Jn 4:20), for he who does not love his brother whom he sees in this state does not love God whom he does not see. And if one can’t see someone in this state, maybe he too is stuck in a sin

which blinds him to seeing his brother or sister who is stuck, entrapped in a sin or in a snare of Satan, therefore both may fail to be restored before they go down the river of no return, and the waterfall consumes them.

So 1 Jn 4:20 is our key to the Kingdom, and so is 1 Pet 4:8, and so is Jms 5:19-20. The Word of our Master, with His Spirit, is the key to the Kingdom for all our brothers and sisters. As we walk in the light we will be safe; we will dwell in safety, in this “safe harbor” — as safe as we make it. And all who work to make it safe are first of all praying as Mt 6:13, “Deliver us from the evil one who blinds our eyes to our brothers’ and sisters’ desperate need of us being a savior who loves them enough to go to them to save their soul from death” (1 Jn 3:14-24).

1 Jn 3:18-21 — If our heart condemns us then it’s His Spirit dwelling in us who is letting us know that we are guilty of sin (Rev 3:19-21). But as 1 Jn 3:21 says, if our heart does not condemn us, then we have boldness to go to our brother or sister in need. Therefore, whatever we ask we will receive, and why? Because we obey Him, especially Jn 13:34, as 1 Jn 3:23 says. But if we do not obey Him by going to a brother or sister in need (any need, physical or spiritual, Acts 4:34), then 1 Jn 3:17 asks the vital question. Make no mistake, “love” in 1 Jn 3:14 is defined by verse 16.

We are all watchmen on the wall, watching out for one another (Pr 11:14; 24:6; 1 Sam 12:11; 22:23). Pr 17:17 — We are all brothers and sisters allied in the same struggle and the same cause.

Pr 18:10; Ps 61:3 — So the safety of our House depends on us not being conformed to this world, not that we are “non-conformists,” but we are conformed to a different society. We broke loose by the power of the Holy Spirit from the cultural mold of this world, not to be “non-conformist” but to be conformed to a different, brand-new culture — a different social order.

Humans are by nature social creatures and tend to conform to the society around them. That is why it is so hard to swim against the current of their culture. And that is

why Christianity didn't work, and that is why the first community didn't work for long. The enemy crept into the new culture and caused it to conform to the world. Christianity was born out of the wreckage of what happened when love died (Rev 2:4) and they were no longer a witness of the brand-new culture.

Acts 5:20 — No angel could tell a Christian the same thing, because the world already knows all about their way of life. A Christian is married to the world, not betrothed to the Messiah (2 Cor 11:2).

So the light of the Edah went out, and many movements have come and gone through the years, but in time the world would always win them back. The Hippie movement of the 60s is a prime example. During the 60s, thousands of young people of middle-class and even uppity-class backgrounds rejected the status quo, materialistic pursuits, and fashionable dress of mainstream America. Instead they pursued a different way of life (though I'm sure the angel would not have endorsed it as in Acts 5:20). But what caused these young whippersnappers to break out of their cultural mold to be non-conformist? Were they really non-conformist, or did they merely conform to a different society? But as we know, they all became hippie-crits, let go, and floated downstream, and finally went over the waterfall to never reform.

The first community/church was able to remain separate from the wicked and perverse generation as long as they remained immersed into the brand-new culture of the New Covenant, and were conformed to it, being transformed by the renewing of their minds. In the beginning they were engrossed in its abundant life to the extent that God Himself sent an angel to command the apostles to go and speak to the people "all the words of this new way of life" (Acts 5:20).

This is the reason why Acts 2 and 4 was recorded in the Holy Scriptures. 1 Ths 2:14 calls it the *Judean Pattern*. They were able to reject the ungodly attitudes and practices and entertainment of their culture. Why? Because they had a brand-new life and culture. They were conformed to a different way of life (Acts 2:40; Jn 12:25).

Thousands were involved in this new culture and way of life. Thousands were able to live as Acts 4:32-37 and 2:44-45 due to the fact of the commandment of the good news they heard that day in Acts 2:40, as Mt 28:18-20 prescribed. Thousands lived together as Acts 2:44-45 as a witness of what it meant to believe in the One who saved them from the world (Mt 6:31-33). Thousands shared the same values, attitudes, and standards of life according to the leading of the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:14). They were led to conform to the culture of the Body of Messiah, the life of love (Jn 13:34-35) and unity (Jn 17:23; Rom 12:1-2).

It takes a community, and a community takes the Holy Spirit living in and leading every believer (Acts 2:44).

But after forty years or so, we can read all about its demise in the letters of Paul and James. The enemies from within rose up and led the people astray (Acts 20:28-30). The enemies from without couldn't have destroyed the church; it was the enemies from within that brought about its demise through compromise.

The wall of protection is only as strong as we make it (Rom 12:1-2). It is as strong as our conformance to the Body of Messiah, the Edah, the Community (Jer 30:20), the congregate whole which is a community, without which there can be no witness.

Congregate is to collect or gather into one — a communal life together called *community*, the *Edah*, which is the same word our Master used in Mt 16:18. And the promise of Mt 16:18 is as long as the walls of separation are strong, as each one of us is a watchman on the wall. *Congregation* is as Acts 2:44-45 — all who believed were together, that is, they no longer conformed to this world (Acts 2:40-42). They were collected, added to the number of those already collected (Isa 56:8) as an exponential increase. Jer 30:19-20 — The wall is our protection against all who come against us. He is our wall as we are gathered to Him (Isa 56:8), our Strong Tower (Ps 61:3; Pr 18:10).

So we must then overcome all of our own iniquities that destroyed the first Edah from within (Heb 10:13). Because we are promised Ps 2:1-12 — safety for all who do not fear men, but only our Strong Tower (Ps 19:9; Isa 49:23-26; Jer 30:20; 31:1).

Ps 2:12 — “Kiss the Son” — All will have the choice. Respect and honor Yahweh’s Anointed and experience great blessing, or refuse to submit and incur His wrath. *Kiss* is a sign of submission (1 Kng 19:18), to do homage.

To kiss “the Social Services” would be to destroy our walls with compromise, as in all the nations (Ps 2).

Submission is absolute, but obedience is relative. To *kiss* is both submission and obedience (Acts 4:19; 5:29-32).