

When Leaders Should Not Be Nice

Within the Christian world, the tension between *when to speak out against* false ideas and the people who bring them and *when to tolerate* diversity of opinion and accept other viewpoints is one of the trickiest problems in day-to-day church life. This very practical issue appears in each letter in the New Testament, in different forms and in different contexts. Depending on the ‘culture’ within our organisation or denomination, we may address differences with fierce words or soothing love. The only way in which to develop the right instincts is to absorb the Biblical role models. In the current context of the European church, with a widening gap between public morals and Christ-like behaviour, the letter of Jude provides us with an example of an inspired response to differences within the church.

Dirk Jongkind is a Dutch biblical scholar who finished his PhD at Cambridge University. His main scholarly interest is in the Greek text of the Bible and the Graeco-Roman backdrop of Acts and the letters. Currently, he is the Research Fellow in New Testament Text and Language at Tyndale House, Deputy Senior Tutor at St Edmund's College, Cambridge, and affiliated lecturer at Cambridge University. He has done much work on Greek manuscripts and other remains from the ancient world.

- I. Introduction

- II. When priorities change
 - A. Concentrating on preaching the Gospel (v3)

 - B. What does fighting for the faith mean?

- III. ‘Certain people’ among the ‘saints’ (v4)
 - A. Looking underneath the rhetoric of the ‘certain people’

 - B. What they teach

 - C. What they say

 - D. Their destiny

- IV. Responses
 - A. How to think about those ‘certain people’
 1. In negative terms

2. In light of Scripture's prophecy

B. Saving some

C. Watching ourselves

V. Practical implications

A. Taking a stance in the 21st century

B. What about the impression we make to outsiders?

C. Does 'fighting for the faith' guarantee a win?