

THE ORIGIN OF NONCONFORMITY

The term nonconformity is a Biblical term derived from the Scripture be not conformed to this world, as found in Romans 12:2. The word conformed comes from the same Greek word that is translated fashioning in I Peter 1:14, where Peter tells Christians not to fashion themselves as they did when they lived in ignorance. This word, as it is used in the Bible, always refers to the outward appearance of a person or object. The fashion pages of the newspapers and catalogs will also verify that it has reference to outward appearance. Nonconformity, therefore, as it is used in Romans 12:1-2, includes a direct reference to the changed outward appearance of our bodies, which we are to present to God. This new outward appearance springs from, and bears testimony to, the transformation of a mind which was previously in ignorance of, and in opposition to, God's will. Since nonconformity always has reference to an outward expression, it is perfectly consistent to think of Romans 12:2 as relating primarily to the Christian's manner of dress and his general outward appearance.

Nonconformity began with a departing from and a loss of conformity to God. Therefore, the very first experience of nonconformity was a nonconformity to God. I shall endeavor to clarify this assertion.

When celestial visitors appeared to men on earth and their raiment is referred to, it is said to be white. Daniel saw the Ancient of Days clothed with a garment white as snow. (Dan 7:9). On the holy mount, some of the disciples had the privilege of seeing a prefiguration of Christ's future glory, and His raiment was white as the light. (Matt 17:2). The angel that rolled away the stone from the grave of Jesus was clothed in raiment as white as snow (Matt 28:3), and the young man seen sitting inside the empty grave of was clothed in a long white garment. (Mark 16:5).

Since Satan was once the anointed Cherub and a member of the celestial family, and since in every Biblical description of heavenly dress is said to be white, we conclude that Satan in his perfect state must also have been clothed in celestial white. But when he changed his heart attitude from that of purity toward God to rebellion toward Him and was cast as profane out of the mount of God, his outward appearance also changed. The great red dragon . . . that old serpent, the devil, had his holy celestial outward beauty replaced with a devilish, sinful, and dangerously red color.

It is a symbolic color for sin. (Isa 1:18). The Bible also refers to red as the color of harlotry (Rev 17:4) and as the color of vanity (Jer 4:30). In our day, it seems rather significant that the greatest anti-God political powers of the world have chosen to give themselves the color the Bible ascribes to the devil, to sin, to

harlotry, and to vanity. In the most corrupt religion of the world, the leaders who rank next to the Pope are also given a red symbol (Cardinals) and wear red hats and cassocks. Red is also considered the universal color for danger.

The devil, once like unto God in heart and appearance, has, ever since his fall, been nonconformed to God in both his heart and his real outward appearance. This origin of nonconformity to God began sometime in the dateless past.

When God made Adam and Eve in His own likeness, their appearance must have been somewhat like the Psalmist's view of God when he says, "...Thou art clothed with honor and majesty. Who coverest Thyself with a light as with a garment..." (Psalm 104:1,2). In their original state, they were conformed unto God in both heart and appearance. But the devil came to them and persuaded them to be not like unto God in their inner attitudes of respect and obedience. Adam and Eve listened to the devil and behold, as their inner attitude toward the likeness of God changed their outward appearance changed also, and they, like the devil, became nonconformed unto God. They immediately sensed their loss of glory and majesty and ran for cover.

God came to their rescue, however, and through the shedding of innocent blood provided an adequate covering for their naked bodies. That blood that was shed might beautifully typify that which changes the heart, and the adequate covering was the outward evidence of that inner change. The man of Gadarea, whose mind and heart were demon-controlled, gave evidence of his demon possession by his outward appearance. The record declares that he wore no clothes. When the Gadarean's heart was cleansed, and his attitude toward Jesus changed, his outward appearance was also changed. He was now clothed and in his right mind.

Originally, nonconformity was nonconformity to God. Now that man has separated himself from God, the call comes to us to renew our minds favorably toward God and not be conformed to this world.

Christian experience begins with a transformation (inner change) of heart and mind, which must result in an outward change of appearance again in conformity to God-likeness.

~Aaron M. Shank