

- c. Religious Pluralism in America -- the further complication of a society characterized by religious pluralism, in which differing moral and ethical standards make it somewhat less difficult to find acceptance in a church in which one's beliefs and behaviors are not questioned or challenged, than in a society in which moral and ethical standards are fairly uniform.
  - d. The Moral Equality of All Human Beings -- the feeling, especially in American society, that all human beings are basically equal, and essentially on the same moral plane; and therefore that individuals have no right to judge other human beings, when the human beings who presume to judge are basically no different from those they judge. All men are equally imperfect, fallible, sinful beings; and therefore the human beings that serve as officers of the church have no right to judge other human beings.
  - e. The Costliness of Discipline -- the costly nature of discipline (whether of children in a home or of the people of God in the church), in terms of expenditure of time, emotional stress to church leaders, and potential misunderstanding for and harm to the people of God, make church discipline an unattractive feature to many.
4. It is interesting to speculate on what Dr. John L. Nevius, whose name has been so prominently associated with the Nevius Method of planting churches on the mission field and of making them self-governing, self-propagating, and self-supporting as soon as possible, might have said concerning these causes of the current lack of emphasis on church discipline. In his book, *The Planting and Development of Missionary Churches*, under the heading "Discipline", he wrote the following:
1. We regard the administration of discipline as indispensable to the growth and prosperity of our work, and attention to it claims a large portion of our time and thoughts.
  2. The proportion of those who have been excommunicated on account of scandalous offenses is comparatively small. The great majority of them, perhaps as many as eighty per cent., are cases of gradual and at last complete neglect of Christian duties, commencing with giving up Bible study, disregard of the Sabbath and neglect of public worship. It now appears that most of these persons entered the Church without a clear apprehension of what Christianity, theoretical and practical, is . . . .
  3. We administer discipline as directed by the Scriptures and generally practiced by Christian churches at home; first, by exhortation and admonition; followed if necessary by a formal trial and suspension; and after a period of suspension varying from a few months to one or two years, in failure of reformation, by excommunication.
  4. The whole number of adult baptisms in my own field during the last seven years has been about one thousand. The proportion of