

WHERE THE CHURCH LOST ITS WAY

Errors Enthroned In Traditions

WHERE THE CHURCH LOST ITS WAY Departure From The Faith Through Errors Enthroned in Traditions

Where The Ekklesia Departed From The Faith

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Christianity has a 2000 years-long history and tradition. We who seek the truth, hope that the message of Christ the Messiah, as presented from pulpits is a pure and accurate one. We hope and expect that those who are presenting the Gospel (good news) to us have a solid understanding of these matters they share and that they attempt to adhere to *purity of doctrine*. We would hope and expect that they acknowledge the Word of God, the Bible, as the proper ecclesiastical authority and guide.

We have only to look at the number of church denominations to sense that there is disagreement among those who promote and sustain the Message of Christianity. “There are approximately 46 major Christian denominations worldwide, each with various sub-branches and distinct doctrinal distinctions. Christianity itself is the largest religion globally, with over 2.3 billion adherents.” (*According to Wikipedia*)

Without the foundation of the Bible we have nothing more than a social organization with an aim of doing good and moral things to improve society. Today millions have turned away from church involvement. They see the Christian religion as mostly irrelevant today. Pew Research has found that about 75% of “millennials” have found no reason to seek religious involvement.

The familiar way of “doing church” and *religious enterprises* I believe, have contributed to this withdrawal from church involvement. I use the term religious enterprises to denote those who are looking to promote religion as a business. Ministries spring up featuring personal gifts, insights, programs to build a brand or sell a product. Christian teaching and preaching in media outlets have been a source of fame and enrichment for many “money preachers.” who have turned the gospel and their spiritual experience into a money making scheme from which they have enriched themselves to the tune of millions of dollars.

Admonitions From The Apostolic Age

Jude, the half brother of Jesus, became a disciple and prophetic spokesman for the church “*ekklesia*” in the first century. He gives a strong admonition to those who would follow. The book of Jude consists of a single letter. It is a one short but potent epistle that we would do well to consult regularly.

Jude 1:3 Beloved, while I was giving all diligence to write unto you of our common salvation, I was constrained to write unto you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints.

Jude 1:4 For there are certain men crept in privily, even they who were of old written of beforehand unto this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ. (ASV)

The Apostle John Provides a Warning About Impostors and False Messiahs

John, the apostle whose writings reveal the deeper Spiritual nature of Christ and the Godhead, addresses the spiritual side of the faith. This is John's admonition in his first epistle. From 1 John Chapter 4: **1John 4:1** "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world. 1Jn 4:2 Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ is" come in the flesh is of God: 1Jn 4:3 and every spirit that confesses not Jesus is not of God: and this is the spirit of the Antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it comes; and now it is in the world already."

Paul The Apostle Provides Prophetic Insight

We are told by Paul that the proper gospel that was given to save souls and rescue from judgment, must adhere to three features; **the right Jesus, the right gospel, and the right spirit.** (2 Cor. 11:4)

Paul writes to Timothy, his son in the faith, to anticipate heretical practices and to contend with doctrinal matters as he continues in the work of the ministry:

1Timothy 4:1 "-But the Spirit saith expressly, that in later times some shall fall away from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons, 1Ti 4:2 through the hypocrisy of men that speak lies, branded in their own conscience as with a hot iron; 1Ti 4:3 forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by them that believe and know the truth."

2Ti 3:1 "-But know this, that in the last days grievous times shall come. 2Ti 3:2 For men shall be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, haughty, railers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 2Ti 3:3 without natural affection, implacable, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, no lovers of good, 2Ti 3:4 traitors, headstrong, puffed up, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; 2Ti 3:5 holding a form of godliness, but having denied the power thereof: from these also turn away."

Peter Adds His Voice to Admonish the Disciples Who Will Follow

2Peter 2:1 "-But there arose false prophets also among the people, as among you also there shall be false teachers, who shall privily bring in destructive heresies, denying even the Master that bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. 2Pe 2:2 And many shall follow their lascivious doings; by reason of whom the way of the truth shall be evil spoken of. 2Pe 2:3 And in covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose sentence now from of old lingers not, and their destruction slumbers not. 2Pe 2:4 For if God spared not angels when they sinned, but cast them down to hell, and committed them to pits of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; 2Pe 2:5 and spared not the ancient world, but preserved Noah with seven others, a preacher of righteousness, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; 2Pe 2:6 and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, having made them an example unto those that should live ungodly; 2Pe 2:7 and delivered righteous Lot, sore distressed by the lascivious life of the wicked 2Pe 2:8 (for that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their lawless deeds):"

In 2 Peter, Chapter 2 Peter warns against individuals who would then and later follow evil doctrines and *the wrong spirit*. He foretells how there will be those who depart from the faith seeking to satisfy personal ambitions and their own natural lusts. This is in fact the nature of the Christian world today. What we observe is a shocking departure from the true faith where ungodly practices are condoned and biblical prohibition is ignored.

We know the early church was alive and sustained by *the dunamis power* from the Holy Spirit. This sustained the faith of multitudes through merciless persecution. Believers made the choice to die rather than to deny the testimony of their own supernatural faith. After all the admonitions from the first apostles the church lost its way. What has survived holds a faint echo of its inception.

It is apparent from today's familiar goings-on that the church has become a worldly institution largely governed by human authority. The dynamic *ekklesia* evidenced by the risen Christ seems to have faded especially in the western secular world.

A Church Without Power

Any church that functions without the involvement and manifestations of the Holy Spirit is one that is in violation of the commandment of Jesus to his disciples. "Wait until you are empowered by the Holy Spirit." Jesus promised to send the *dunamis* power of God that would enable his followers. It would be a *comforter* and *helper*. He would reveal the reality of "*Christ in Us*." He would orchestrate the work in the body and show things *that are to come*. (The promise of the Father; **Acts 1:4,5** *"-but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, said he, ye heard from me: Act 1:5 for John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days hence."*)

Many church denominations have not experienced any manifestation of Holy Spirit power. Some denominations actually teach the doctrine of **secessionism**. They may say that they believe in *salvation*. How are any to be saved? Scripturally we can not be saved without the Holy Spirit's action, which is "*the Power of God*."

It is my view that churches can be broken into three categories; the Pentecostal, those who say the power of God is still central to the Christian life. Another segment of the Christian pie are protestant, evangelical, Bible-based denominations. Among these are many denominations who believe the supernatural was only meant for the beginning of the church age. I will call the final

third class to be those consisting of a blend of the Christian-legalistic or pagan cults, such as “Gnostic Christians,” Unitarians, Roman Catholics and Adventists.

A large part of Christendom including the Roman Catholic, holds the belief in a mystery-power that is manifested within the ceremony of the mass and other sacraments. These rites must be officiated properly through a highly trained and ordained priestly class.

Sacerdotalism existed as a feature of the Christendom since Constantine. Prior to this it was a common practice in the pagan world. A form of temple worship echoed Roman and Greek traditions where gods and goddess were served with formal kinds of sacrifices and worship. Formalized priesthood was well established by the time of Augustine. By the time of *the Reformation* the authority of the priesthood was lessened but the notion of a priest-overseer continued. This ordained clergy person has always “out ranked” and governed over the *common people*. We call those confined to pews, the laity.

Enter Sacerdotalism, Exit The Priesthood of Every Believer

From the beginning, the teachings of Paul brought to focus The Body of Christ into which we have become joined. Paul wrote about the body as “the one new man.” We who believe become a living, fully functioning part of that body. 1 Corinthians chapter 12 begins to explain the nature of the body being members of one another and indispensable to be grown by edification of each part.

*1Co 12:1 But concerning spiritual manifestations, brethren, I do not wish you to be ignorant.
1Co 12:2 Ye know that when ye were of the nations ye were led away to dumb idols, in whatever way ye might be led. 1Co 12:3 I give you therefore to know, that no one, speaking in the power of the Spirit of God, says, Curse on Jesus; and no one can say, Lord Jesus, unless in the power of the Holy Spirit.
1Co 12:4 But there are distinctions of gifts, but the same Spirit;
1Co 12:5 and there are distinctions of services, and the same Lord;
1Co 12:6 and there are distinctions of operations, but the same God who operates all things in all.
1Co 12:7 But to each the manifestation of the Spirit is given for profit.
1Co 12:8 For to one, by the Spirit, is given the word of wisdom; and to another the word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit; 1Co 12:9 and to a different one faith, in the power of the same Spirit; and to another gifts of healing in the power of the same Spirit; 1Co 12:10 and to another operations of miracles; and to another prophecy; and to another discerning of spirits; and to a different one kinds of tongues; and to another interpretation of tongues. 1Co 12:11 But all these things operates the one and the same Spirit, dividing to each in particular according as he pleases.” (Darby Translation)*

The remainder of 1 Corinthians, Chapter 12 goes to on to describe in greater detail the importance of each and **every member of the body**. Paul is absolutely clear that each believer

who makes up the body has an indispensable role to play. This same emphasis on the Body of Christ is found in Romans 12 and is beautifully reiterated in 1 Peter chapter 4 verses 10 and eleven.

1Pe 4:10 “-As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. 1Pe 4:11 If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.” (KJV)

It is clear that His body, called “the church” was intended to function in a very organic and intimate way. It was intended to grow through the mutual interaction of every part. This was an efficient way for discipling to take place. Those with more experience and more maturity were able to share their unique gifts with others whether young or old. New converts and mature disciples would share in fellowship. (koinonia) The Holy Spirit quickened the various gifts as He gave direction. We see the gifts in operation and the form of meeting recorded by Paul in his letter to Corinth, in *1 Corinthians, chapter 14*. The meetings were lively, free, instructive and orderly. All things were done for the purpose of edification. The place of meeting was informal and consisted of someone’s home. There were likely no prepared homilies or sermons. These became ingrained in religious meetings in later times. The meetings that Paul wrote about consisted of sharing on such matters being revealed for the edification of the assembled congregation.

One person *e.g. a pastor*, did not dominate the proceedings as we find in almost every church today. There was an informality in the first church. There was an intimate and congenial fellowship with sharing, questions and testimonies of the works and wonders of the Holy Spirit. Everyone was free to share and participate. It was affectionate and familial. Paul called for the edification of all. The faith and experiences of inspired and encouraged others.

So what happened? We can see that time has morphed the *ekklesia*, *the called out ones* into a something far different. There is a clear departure from that which was given to the first century saints. Today we see a formalized body with a great gulf of distinction between the leadership and the laity.

The Way Of Salvation: Slippery Paths in Soteriology

Typically, today a church has a credentialed leader or leaders. They are elevated over the laity physically and functionally. A typical church meeting that may last an hour or two is called a

worship service. The church has lost its way in numerous ways. Let us take a good look and we will see why Christianity is on the decline and our culture has suffered degradation in its wake.

First we must answer the question of what a true Christian is. Becoming a Christian has always been a mystery. Godly mysteries are hidden from *the mighty* of this world and the intellectually snobbish. Most people do not know that it is God alone who prepares our souls to both seek Him and eventually draw us to Himself.

It is actually neither human agency nor a church rite (sacrament) that makes us a Christian. Rather, it is the supernatural ‘drawing’ of the Holy Spirit. This eventually leads to the quickening of *a new life* within the seeker. It results in the miracle that is called being “born again,” “being born from above,” or “becoming a new creation.” Since it is the Spirit that quickens *it is entirely possible that this could happen in a more formal setting* such as a catechism, baptism or evangelical event. In my case, it was independent of any prayer meeting or church house activity.

We are called by God both to seek Him and eventually make us ready to be “baptized” into a Spiritual Body. We who believe become part of the universal church whose heavenly head is Christ Jesus. **“*There is One Body, One Spirit, One Baptism.*” (Ephesians 4:5)** We then become *a living stone* that makes up the church. (*the ekklesia, the called out ones*)

As we drive through any town or city we will likely pass many church houses. These all display a billboard that distinguishes them from hundreds of other denominations. Each denomination has a distinctive that purports to have a better doctrinal bent than another. Though they have a semblance of being Christian they still may not be Spiritually alive. In fact most of these churches could maintain their programs if there were no resurrection! Why? Because much of the apostolic life with its vibrant community and zeal is absent.

Let us take a moment to see who God calls and who God probably will not call:

1Co 1:24 “*but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 1Co 1:25 For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. 1Co 1:26 For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. 1Co 1:27 But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; 1Co 1:28 God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, 1Co 1:29 so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.*”

I list this proof text in order to highlight the disparity between those who are the proud, intellectually brilliant and the privileged in this world who remain mostly blind to the truth of the

gospel and Spiritual things. Righteousness has been shown to fall upon the humble.

The Church House, Temple or House of Meeting

Know ye not that ye are the temple? **1Co 3:16** *"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? 1Co 6:19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?"* (KJV) If you were taught to enter a church with awe and reverence, it may have been for the reason we were told that the church is "God's house" as though this were a pagan temple. In fact it is not the house of God, rather we believers who become the residence of God after becoming "saved" and an adopted child of God. It is a fact that we who are of His Body do not "Go to church," rather, the church goes with us. It assembles itself when two or more gather in his name. In a very real sense the community of believers is imbued with God's Spirit. We are imbued with intentions which are focused God-ward. This community is an enclave of holiness in a corrupt and pagan world whose eyes focus upon people, pursuits and pleasures of this world.

I have visited dozens of churches and cathedrals some of them express ornate richness and splendor worthy of God's praise. Though sumptuous they point to the vanities and dreams of this world. They intend to impress the senses; the eye and fleshly emotions.

We have just observed the installation of another pope, Pope Leo XIV. The ceremony was a lavish display richness and splendor beyond imagination. Bishops and Cardinals, resplendent in their vestments were prominently elevated owing to their titles. The setting was among the artistic masterworks of Michelangelo in the Sistine Chapel. As worshipers, where should our focus be? Where is our treasure? Where is our true home?

Remember what Jesus told Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world." If it were of this world my servants would fight." **John 18:36** *Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: **but now is my kingdom not from 'here'**.* We see that the papacy and many other churches have turned the kingdom of God into an earthly kingdom and twisted the entire narrative of *the Kingdom of God*. What did Jesus say about who is greatest in the Kingdom? (**Matthew 18:1,4**) and **Mat 20:25** *But Jesus called them to him and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Mat 20:26 It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, -"*

Called to The Ministry

Let's get something straightened out. We who are called unto Christ are called "out of this world." We are designated as "saints" and "disciples." (*Romans 1:7 - 1 Corinthians 1:2*) We are all called into the ministry! We are all given particular gifts that are meant to be used for the edification and blessing of the Body. This notion of a calling to ministry is a mere pretense that sets certain men and women on a course to follow training to become a ministry professional. The ministry as a career under the supervision of a theological hierarchy is a worldly tradition that we have come to accept and honor. Just as we have come to accept the idea that the church house is the house of God and we non professionals *are called to be an audience* and support for a denominational enterprise.

Once an individual is ordained for *professional* ministry he or she is expected to have sufficient knowledge to present sermons, grow a congregation and follow the professional duties of a pastor or priest such as marriages and funerals. Those who aspire to *leadership* are expected to display some special aptitudes or abilities. A gift of public speech and dramatic oratory is an asset that enables holding the attention of an audience for a half hour or more. Associate pastors and deacons have there own delegated responsibilities in carrying out a meeting or a 'worship service."

Interactions With Others and True Christian Community

How much spiritual interaction can be found between members? On rare occasions someone may interrupt the orderly ongoing program for the current session with an "amen" or "yes sir!" This may be considered something unwelcome that may put-off the pastor or officiant from his message. "Top down" leadership by a pastor or priest was not envisioned in the first church. "Koinonia" typified the kind of meeting for most assemblies of the first and second century. There was liberty and informality, but not without respect and order, as individuals shared those things that the Holy Spirit had put into their hearts. **Koinonia** is characterized by mutual participation and sharing and with respect toward each member. This was understood to be the strength of that body. Formality and orders of service destroyed the liberty of the first church.

The Power of Personal Testimony

Testimonies are a missing tool of ministry. Testimonies shared by individuals are a powerful force for faith-building and evangelism. Testimonies can begin to patch up the dry and

impersonal religion that has befallen the Christian world. Just a few testimonies of the goodness of God on someone's behalf can fire up others and encourage them in a more victorious personal walk of faith.

People become afraid of interaction in a church house setting because it is so out of the norm. Parishioners have been conditioned to be timid, lurking in the back pews. In a typical church today it is rare that conversations turn to godly matters, when this should be the most important form of social exchange. Sharing is a part of demonstrating love of the brethren. It reveals both respect and sincere affection. With Godly exchanges church becomes a welcome part of one's social life. There is joy in participation when an assembled body can say that *Christ is in their midst*.

Discarded Israel and the Heretical Doctrine of Replacement Theology

When the church was born in Jerusalem there was more than antagonism between the ways of Judaism with its laws and traditions and the new order called; what was it to be called? The way? Messiah's Kingdom now? It was Jesus who upset the apple cart of Jewish tradition being revealed as the prophesied messiah and approved with signs and wonders and scriptural backing that was undeniable. The schism between those who guarded the traditions of Moses and the temple was intolerable. Jeshua of Nazareth had to die and stay dead! There could be no rumor of any resurrection. Neither could there be any kind of miraculous happenings reported that attested that Jesus was alive as signs and wonders continued to be performed in his name!

The God of heaven had indeed removed his hand from the temple ordinances and Mosaic traditions. The reality of Jesus the Messiah being risen and alive was undeniable prophetic fulfillment. He who was birthed into the world supernaturally. Jesus of Nazareth fulfilled God's promises to *his own chosen people*. This new move of God would initiate the creation of something called "**the one new man**." The Jew's rejection of Yeshua the Messiah that brought conflict was to be only for a season. The eternal promises of God's word through Moses, the prophets and the Psalms were canceled or declared obsolete.

Ephesians 2:11 Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands—

Ephesians 2:12 remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. Ephesians 2:13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. Ephesians 2:14 For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility Ephesians 2:15 by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, Ephesians 2:16 and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing

the hostility. Ephesians 2:17 And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. Ephesians 2:18 For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. (ESV)

The Heretical Teaching of Replacement Theology

With the lingering hostility of the Jews against the church and the resentment of the later church toward and the Jews it is easy to see how the idea of “supercessionism” would come into being. This is the fancy theological term for the church replacing Israel. It was an emerging view even among the first church fathers including Justin Martyr that the gospel of Jesus the Messiah had replaced Judaism. Judaism fell under God’s judgment and for all practical purposes was removed from God’s playing field. Paul was certainly aware of the numbers of prophetic promises for Israel throughout the Law and the prophets. These however, were yet to come to fruition in the last days.

The prophetic Book of Daniel and the minor prophets provide clear proofs that in *the time of the end* Israel would return to their own land, would prosper as a people again. Israel would become *a burdensome stone for all nations*, and would be the premier focus of God before the Kingdom Age comes into being. She, Israel, would survive as one *in a furnace of much affliction*. She would go through the fire and a remnant would finally recognize the true Messiah, as they declare, “*Baruch haba b'shem Adonai.*”

It is Paul who in 1 Corinthians Chapters 9 through 11 expresses his own deep sorrow over the unbelieving ways of his fellow Hebrews but also brings into focus the future of Israel and his brethren returning as were, to life from the dead. This echoed the Messiah’s deep anguish that he expressed before he made his way into Jerusalem amid the acclaim of palm waiving Jews. That the people would not receive the things that provided for their peace in this “there day.”

Ezekiel speaks prophetically of Israel coming back as it were, from the dead but eventually being re-clothed with flesh and blood and finally made spiritually alive. (*Ezekiel 37, prophecy of the dry bones*)

Replacement theology has been an extremely toxic and dangerous doctrine that should never have been codified and promoted. Luther’s brand of antisemitism was imparted to the reformers. It allowed antisemitism to rage over the centuries and gave Hitler a foundation upon which to base his campaign of annihilation against the Jews in World War 2.

Prophetic Confusion: The kingdom, Then? Or When?

When we try to understand the “kingdom of God” Bible scholars have struggled to reach a

conclusion. From the traditions of the Roman church and the writings of St. Augustine (354-430) the church of Rome was proclaimed to be the Kingdom of God on earth. The doctrine that of no future millennium is called *amillennialism*. It was the Roman church since Augustine who would be the figurehead of God's kingdom. Roman Catholicism considered itself to be founded upon the "apostolic succession" from St. Peter to the present time through the bishops. The idea of a millennial reign of God was passed on to the reformers along with the idea of taking the prophetic scriptures that addressed Israel and spiritualizing them, turned them into metaphors rather than reading them as literal future promises.

Premillennialism and Dispensationalism

According to John F. Walvoord, "Dispensationalism is an approach to the Bible that recognizes differing moral responsibilities for people, in keeping with how much they knew about God and His ways. God's revelation of Himself in different eras required moral responses on the part of humanity."

Over the millennia there are distinct chapters in God's times of interaction with humanity. Most of these in some ways are overlaid upon *the people of God* who God chose to fulfill his purpose and plan of redemption. 1. Innocence or free will 2. Conscience, doing what they thought right 3. Government, exalted man 4. Promise, Abrahamic covenant 5. Moses and the Law 6. Grace, the Church Age 7. Millennium the 'Day of the Lord' following judgment of the wicked.

Sermons Homiletics and Teaching

In modern church houses, as for past centuries, there is a pulpit in the front of the sanctuary. It is raised somewhat above the surrounding floor. On the lower level there may be pews arranged in rows or there may be chairs. The chairs are for the congregation. The chair for the preacher may be more ornamental and placed on the dias. Guest speakers or special ministry guests may get a similar ornamental chair. This aids in supporting both their bodies and their egos. Preachers preach and homiletics help them preach more effectively. The purpose is to inspire and instruct or as it said in current parlance, "to challenge." Pastors spend several hours a week to prepare a sermon.

I often hear it said that Peter preached a sermon on that first Pentecost when the mighty rushing wind came forth with cloven tongues of fire. That was not a sermon! It was rather a declaration by the Holy Spirit of God as Peter was quickened to become the very "*Oracle of God*" and given the words to speak. Neither was it a sermon when Steven, illuminated as a veritable

Moses, spoke forth the Word of God as it was downloaded to him before his accusers. Religion has a way of minimizing and removing the “life” from the way of God to fit its modern context.

The pastoral gift is one of many gifts that can be used to edify the body. The teacher is another and there are others equally important. The body should have access to them all as noted in Corinthians 12 above. If only we acknowledged that believers were all disciples they should not be deprived being made ready to minister through the activation of the many gifts God made available to prepare them for the work of the ministry. Note that some earlier translations like the

*KJV

Ephesians 4:11 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, Ephesians 4:12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, Ephesians 4:13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, Ephesians 4:14 so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Ephesians 4:15 Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, Ephesians 4:16 from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love. (ESV)

*Ephesians 4:12 For **the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry**, for the edifying of the body of Christ:”

The clergy laity schism was an invention that changed the gospel after the second century.

Worship Bands and Performance Borrow From the World

Being a good singer or a good musician is not the only criteria for worship leaders. Churches seek persons who have the ability to sing and play well. They invest a lot of money in sound and other equipment which can rival any modern recording studio. They also model worship after a pop concert venue where professional Christian artists record their latest hits. What is a less known fact is that there is another secret ingredient that makes a great worship ensemble. It is the anointing! The anointing is what we find in the Psalmist who spends time in the presence of Jesus, and pursues heavenly things. It is heaven’s touch upon a human vessel.

Praise and worship are a matter of the heart and bringing people into the presence of God not a mere warm up for the main event. Without the Spirit a worship band may be another “rock concert,” we might have the wrong spirit manifesting or we may have “ichabod.”

The Liberal Left, The World View In Crisis

If there is one thing that is evident in the current time, it is the rampant unraveling of common sense and “rightness.” People are arguing the rightness of things that have no reason,

logic, nor science to support them. Such matters as the gender confusion of the past ten years; that men can be women or visa-versa. Spiritual blindness and lack of discernment, in the face of spiritual deception, has never been more evident. Things seem to be heading for chaos. Liberal Christianity with its erudite and celebrated authors have turned their backs on the gospel and the Bible denying its basic tenets, even the person of Christ, his death and resurrection. Paul's admonition of "fierce" and dangerous times promised in the last days is in perfect manifestation. Jesus repeatedly warned us before departing this world to "-not be deceived." Has there ever been a time like this with people declaring that black is white and "good is evil?"

2Ti 3:1 This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. 2Ti 3:2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 2Ti 3:3 Without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, 2Ti 3:4 Traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; 2Ti 3:5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." (KJV)

Theologians who ought to be steeped in the Truth of the gospel, the cross, and resurrection have fallen into unbelief. Current theology has eroded into,"No cross, no blood, no resurrection!" Christendom can not go darker than this. How brazen that church authorities declare truth as lies without fearing a terrible consequence, when they are called before the throne of judgment.

1Co 15:12 Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? 1Co 15:13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. 1Co 15:14 And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. 1Co 15:15 We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. 1Co 15:16 For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. 1Co 15:17 And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. 1Co 15:18 Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. 1Co 15:19 If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. 1Co 15:20 But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. 1Co 15:21 For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. 1Co 15:22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.

Oh faithless generation! We face the dangerous times prophesied long ago. The new gospel of the Liberal church is ecumenicism. It is the "big tent" of inclusionism. We can not keep the good and filter out the bad, we must include the bad, the dark and demonic, the poison in the pot,

the broad road and the wide gate. We who are born of the Spirit still have a witness though we be few, rejected and reviled. We stand before our godless accusers though they threaten with sword or flame. O faithless generation! “Oh generation of vipers, who has warned you to flee from the wrath to come!”

Charles Pinkney 05-30-2025

Additional Source Titles

Addressing the Matter of Koinonia and Apostolic Gathering

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Frank Viola, Author and Blogger

Viola is the author of Numerous Books Including Pagan Christianity

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