

The Bondage of the Church

In the 1500's Dr. Martin Luther started a reformation that freed the church from the tyranny, materialism and lies of the Roman Catholic church and the Pope. He rested his entire faith on Christ, not princes, councils or popes. It is now over 500 years later and the Christian church faces yet another need for a reformation. It needs to be freed from the tyranny, materialism and lies of the flesh, from the rule of synods, denominations, institutionalism and corporate minded leaders who are leading naive lambs down the path of worldly enticements. Only this time, it is far more insidious and deceptive.

In Luther's day it was plain to see the corruption, the lies, the deception and the need for freedom, but is it so obvious today? After all, some denominational and church leaders very smoothly and confidently assure us that there is nothing wrong with all the worldly enticements or "tools," such as contemporary worship, contemporary Christian music, entertainment, secular marketing, parochial schools dominated by secular thinking, fund raisers, potluck dinners, pews, institutionalized bibles and hymnals, ladies groups, youth groups, teen groups, mothers groups, fathers groups, groups for alcoholics, groups for drug addicts and groups for sex addicts and the list goes on and on and on, until the contemporary church is no longer a church, but a giant social club that requires millions of dollars to maintain. And guess what... There's nothing outwardly "wrong" or sinful about any of the things mentioned above. Not one thing - or so we are led to believe.

Until, you put them together in a "congregate" whole and end up with the focus of the church being something totally different than a **focus** on God's Word. People that call themselves Christians, can become so wrapped up in administration, so called "ministries," programs, policies and paradigms that they fail to see that there is a better way. They fail to see that they are in bondage to the things of this world. They fail to see how there is a reality beyond the matrix of the modern church that needs to be freed from the bondage of the flesh. They fail to see how they are free in Christ to do real ministry, one on one, without any of the trappings of the modern day church that drain them of their time, money and energy. Take away the programs, paradigms, groups, social gatherings, marketing, fund raisers, etc. and what is left? The Word of God!

Where did Martin Luther start in the first place? He started and ended with the Word of God. Where should our focus be? Starting and ending with the Word of God! Don't be afraid to throw out the trappings, rip off the layers of gift wrapping, see through the fleshly, worldly enticements and get down to and back to the most precious gift of all - the gift of Jesus Christ and Him crucified - the gift of God's precious Word and love. Don't let any church leadership fool you into thinking that everything is all right, when we have a country that is tripping over itself building giant edifices to itself and in spite of itself hasn't been able to make the Christian church grow in the past 20 years.

Do you think it is a coincidence, that there are billions of dollars being poured into "ministry" after "ministry," singing groups, theme parks, bookstores, worship edifices, CCM, entertainment, the social gospel, the Church Growth Movement,

country club type social groups, etc. and yet the Christian church in America is not growing? Do you honestly believe it is from lack of trying? Or could it be from a lack of power? Could it be from having a form of godliness but denying the power? Could it be that so many people are doing "ministry," that hardly anyone is truly proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ? Could it be that some of the so called "Christian" church of today is so cloaked in worldly materialism, socialism, entertainmentism, educationism and every other kind of -ism and schism imaginable that very little real ministry is getting done?

Do the math! How many self-proclaimed Christian churches are there in America? How many millions belong to the institutionalized church? And yet how fast is the Christian church in America growing? It's not!

The math is simple:

The institutionalized church + no growth = something is wrong.

One Christian + the proclamation of the Gospel = the way it should be.

In Revelation 13:18 it says, "This calls for wisdom. If anyone has insight, let him calculate the number of the beast, for it is man's number. His number is 666."

Now, do the math again. What is it that has infiltrated too much of the modern church? What is it that reaches into the very souls of too many institutionalized Christians today? What is it that is effecting so much of so called "ministry" today? Could it be MAN? Could it be entertainment, secular marketing, the Church

Growth Movement, corporate mindedness, programs, paradigms and policies? Could it be the extra-Biblical proliferation of opinions, ideas, thoughts, words and deeds? What is the ugly, hideous beast that has reared its monstrous head within the corporate church of today? Could it be the modern church's focus on the flesh, the worldly, man instead of the One True God/Man Jesus Christ?

The church + a focus on man = 666.

The church + a focus on Christ = the way it should be.

What should YOU do about it? Put down your shovels, brooms and computer diskettes. Get out of the pews, get out from behind the desks, take off the robes, quit tapping your feet to the music, quit thinking about yourself and your country club churches, quit thinking about how you can entertain yourself and deceptively drag more people into the shallow, emptiness of the secularized churches of today - grab your Bibles and get out into the world to proclaim the Gospel.

It is a NO BRAINER. The Bible teaches that the ONLY way faith is created is through the proclamation of the Gospel. You can "do ministry" until you are blue in the face, but unless you get off your high horse of worldlyism and proclaim the Gospel you are a clanging gong, just making a bunch of noise and accomplishing nothing. Sit in your comfortable pew all you want. Let the preachers preach all you want. Listen to CCM all day and night if you want. Use every marketing scheme, secular program, worldly idea, opinion and paradigm you want - but when push comes to shove, unless you are proclaiming Jesus

Christ and Him crucified you are wasting your time. Souls are dying and going to hell and God is not being glorified.

The time has come - the time is now - a deep and thorough reformation is needed now! Recant of all the worldly paradigms, secularism, materialism and other -isms within the churches of today and show your solidarity and unity by picking up your Bibles and sharing Christ with the masses. Don't let any church's social or worldly "ministries" deter you from doing what you know is good and right in God's sight. Put the **focus** solidly back on Christ where it belongs and give HIM all the glory!

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