

Will the Real Church Please Stand Up?

by Stan Hallett

Preamble

God is preparing a church that is without spot or wrinkle or any such thing (Eph 5:27). His prayer was that we all be one (John 17:21), yet the church is more divided now than it ever was. There has been much growth in the church since Azusa Street in the early 1900's. It is documented that some converts were baptized in Jesus' name as far back as 1901. Amazingly that is 100 years ago as I write this letter. God revealed to many that He was indeed one, that we needed to repent, to be baptized in Jesus' name for the remission of sins. Many were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave the utterance, just as the early church did in the book of Acts.

We saw that we needed to be separated and live a holy life, but it seems in 100 years that was as far as most of us got (me included). I know this is going to rub some folks the wrong way, but the truth is we never broke completely away from many of the false teachings of denominational churches, traditions of men and even Catholicism.

The first two chapters are tracts that I wrote a few years ago. I included these so that those that are not part of the church can see how to become part of the church. These are 'The Greatest Lie Ever Told' and 'Salvation in a Nutshell'.

The remaining chapters are addressed to the Church. These are not intended to be used to cause division in the church. Please do not use this information to attack individuals or groups.

The Greatest Lie Ever Told

Who could tell the greatest lie? The answer is simple, the father of all lies who is none other than satan himself (John 8:44). What would one consider a perfect crime? Would it not be a crime where any evidence to the contrary would be hidden or could not be found? A perfect lie is one that is so near the truth that the person being deceived actually believes that have obtained what it is that the liar does not want them to have.

He starts out by telling them that the Christianity stuff isn't for them, and it works most of the time. But when they insist he tricks them into accepting a fake form of Godliness. The apostle Paul talks about this in 2 Timothy 3:1-7 where he says:

“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

Most “Christians” today have a form of Godliness but deny the power thereof. These are ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of truth. The deceived person believes that they in fact have obtained their salvation.

Slick sales people try to do this all the time. They try to convince you that what they are selling you is the best buy for your money. It's the genuine article, it's the best there is. They have the best deal for you. You've been fooled this way before. We've all be taken by the con-artist, the liar and the thief. How much better is the master of liars, the master of con-men and the master of thieves?

You say “how could he be able to do this”? Surely you'd recognize satan and his lies. But the Bible says that satan can appear as angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14). Further it says in the very next verse: “*it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness*”. That's right! There are men appearing as great men of God preaching to great crowds that they gather unto themselves. They are ministers of satan sent to deceive the masses. Indeed the masses are being deceived!

What is this greatest lie ever told? What is this great deception that is being preached by ministers of satan that are posing as great men of God across this country and the world? What is this lie that has deceived millions into believing that they are saved? The lie is the one that says that all you have to do is: “accept Jesus as your personal savior and you are saved.”

There are slightly different versions and variations to the lie such as saying a little prayer, or asking forgiveness for all your sins, or a prayer of repentance along with

accepting Jesus as your savior, but they are all lies, all deception and all part of the greatest lie that satan ever told.

You may say; “Wait a minute, isn’t this in the Bible?” . . . Nope, not there. There is not one word in God’s word that says that all you have to do is accept Jesus as your personal savior and you are then eternally saved. There is not one word that says “simply say a little prayer and perhaps ask for forgiveness or a prayer of repentance and you are saved”. There is not one single verse that says that “if you believe in Jesus Christ you will be saved”. . . not one.

So where did this come from? It came from that satan influenced twisting of scripture and adding and taking away from the Word of God.

Here are some of the popular verses that you might be quoted that are in the Bible that satan tries to use to get you to swallow his lie:

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” - John 3:16

They use this scripture to say that you just believe in Jesus you’ll be saved. The devil takes this one scripture, twists it and makes a doctrine out of it. What this verse is saying is that if you believe in him, in other words believe that he is Lord and Savior then with that belief you can build on that by obeying the word of the Lord and be saved. If you indeed believe that He is Lord and Savior then you should not perish but act on what you believe and obey the gospel and be saved.

Jesus never said all you have to do to be saved is just believe in me. What He did say is *“except a man be born of water and of Spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of God”* (John 3:5). What He did say was *“Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”* (Matthew 7:14)

Let me help them out for a minute. . . There’s another scripture that says; *“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name”* (John 1:12).

This may seemingly give credence to the belief that “if you’ll just receive Jesus as your personal savior, you’ll be saved”. But that’s not what it says at all! What it says is that IF you receive Him as your Lord and Savior then you have the power to BECOME the son of God, even to them that believe on His name. It does not say if you believe in him you ARE saved, but that IF you believe on Him and IF

you receive Him as your LORD and SAVIOR then indeed you HAVE the power to BECOME the sons of God and be saved.

Satan twists the meaning of Ephesians 2:8,9 which says: *“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.”* He tries to get this to mean that we do not have to do anything including obey the Gospel of Jesus Christ to be saved. This doctrine claims that obeying John 3:5 or Acts 2:38, or any other scripture is a work and not required to be saved.

Yes, it is true that Jesus paid it all on the cross. It is true that we cannot earn our own salvation by doing good works or any other means. But obeying the Gospel of Jesus Christ is NOT a work, it is obedience. Neither can you earn it by obedience, but only through obedience to the Gospel are you saved.

2 Thessalonians 1:7,8 says;

“...when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

If indeed obedience to the Gospel is a work, if true repentance is a work, if being baptized in His name is a work and not necessary for salvation, then indeed praying the “sinners prayer” or “accepting Jesus as your personal savior” is also a work and not needed by the rules of this very same doctrine.

No, we cannot earn salvation. We are not worthy of it no matter what we do. It is indeed by grace we are saved and not of ourselves lest any man should boast. However, if we truly accept Him as Lord and Savior then being our Lord means that we are to be obedient to Him. If we are not obedient to Him then we are saying He is not our Lord thus we have NOT accepted Him as Lord and savior and we are liars.

Most “Christians” today want the savior part, but do not want a Lord. They want the benefit, but not what they consider to be a price that comes with it. They want to be saved but still do as they please. They want to be assured they are going to heaven and still enjoy the pleasures of this world. Satan gives them exactly what they want. . . at least they think they have it. They’ve been duped by the greatest lie ever told!

We are either a slave to Satan or a servant of Jesus, there is no in-between.

Salvation in a Nutshell

"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared **FOR THEM THAT LOVE HIM**" - I Corinthians 2:9

Note that they are "prepared for them that **LOVE HIM**".

Jesus said; "**IF YE LOVE ME**, keep my commandments." - John 14:15

COMMANDMENT:

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the **NAME** of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:" - Matthew 28:19

Notice that the word **NAME** is singular . . . one name. The words Father, Son and Holy Ghost are titles, not names.

Also notice that Jesus said; "**GO**". He didn't say it "would be nice if you did", or "you might think about it". It was a direction, a commandment to **GO** do it.

Explanation on How to Obey (What is the **NAME**?)

Peter was given the keys of the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 16:19) Many people picture Peter at heavens gate because of this. But these were not physical keys! Peter shared these same keys with us. . .

In Acts 2:37 They asked the Apostles what they should do, and Peter said: "**REPENT**, and be **BAPTIZED** every one of you in the **NAME** of **JESUS CHRIST** for the remission of sins, and ye shall **RECEIVE THE GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST**." - Acts 2:38

What is the **NAME** of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost? Peter knew, and the other Apostles standing there with him knew. This **NAME** is **JESUS**!

"Know ye not, that so many of us as were **BAPTIZED** into **JESUS** Christ were baptized into his death?" - Romans 6:3

"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the **NAME** of the Lord **JESUS..**"
- Colossians 3:17

What happens if you do not **OBEY**? - "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that **OBEY NOT** the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;" - II Thessalonians 1:7-9

Don't fall for the lie that you need not obey or do anything to be saved because some doctrine has labeled them "works". Salvation IS a gift. We do **NOT** deserve it and **CANNOT EARN** it through "works of righteousness" (Titus 3:5).

Works of righteousness are feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, etc., etc. You cannot earn salvation by doing good works.

"Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." James 2:17-26

Obedience to God's word is a requirement! If you do not **OBEY** His commandments you are none of His.

*"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the **WILL** of my Father which is in heaven."* - Matthew 7:21

Believing IN the Lord is **NOT** enough . . . "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble." - James 2:19

We however, should believe **ON** Him (John 1:12, John 6:29, John 7:39, John 9:35, John 9:36, John 11:48, John 17:20, Acts 16:31, Acts 19:4, Romans 14:24, Philippians 1:29, 1 Timothy 1:16, 1 John 3:23, 1 John 5:3).

To believe **ON** Him is to put **ALL** your trust in **HIM** and to Let Him be the Lord over your life. For if He is truly our **LORD** and Savior we should **OBEY** Him and put all of our trust in Him.

How Can You Be Saved? Here Are The "Keys"

REPENT of your sins. This means to earnestly turn away from all sin. It does not mean to confess your sins then go right back to doing the things you've always done.

"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." Psalms 51:17

Be Baptized in Jesus Name

*"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a **MAN** be born **AGAIN**, he cannot see the kingdom of God." John 3:3*

*"Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a **MAN** be **BORN OF WATER** and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." John 3:5*

"BORN OF WATER" is water baptism in **JESUS NAME** just as stated in Matthew 28:19 and Acts 2:38. It does not mean natural child birth as some foolish people suggest. Note that he says " Except a **MAN**", He is talking about a man, not a baby. Then He says "born **AGAIN**" (a second time).

"...while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us. . ." I Peter 3:20,21

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Mark 16:16

Be Filled With the Holy Ghost

This is being born "of the Spirit". There is a marvelous evidence of this infilling of the Holy Ghost. Read of the accounts in the book of Acts. It's happening that same today as it did then. Don't let anyone fool you and cheat you out of your salvation at any cost.

"And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." Acts 2:4

"For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the LORD our God shall call." Acts 2:39

"And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" Luke 11:9-13

How to Receive the Gift of the Holy Spirit

If you desire to be saved, to be part of the Church, to be part of God's kingdom and have eternal life then you must receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

There is only one consistent evidence that this has taken place and that you will speak in other tongues as the Spirit gives the utterance.

To The Church

False Doctrines, Old and New

Many doctrines are creeping into the Church body and the Church appears to be more scattered and divided now than it ever was. Strange doctrines such as “partial preterism” and “divine flesh” doctrines, etc. are making their way into the main stream Apostolic Pentecostal Church and are infiltrating even the largest oneness organizations in this country.

On the other hand much of the Church is still following the traditions of men more than the Word of God. Many of these man-made customs and traditions have become law and have been added to the Word of God. Many saints are so rooted in the traditions of men that when we try to get back to the word of God and the basics of our faith and get back to the way the Church was when it first began, it sounds so foreign that it sounds like heresy to some.

The Church is being attacked on all fronts. There is a great need not only to block out these new and strange doctrines, however we also need to root out man-made traditions that have been added to, or have circumvented the Word of God.

Hair Doctrine

I suffer a little persecution in the Church from brethren for this doctrinal stand, but never the less I feel led to tell the truth in an effort to put an end to what I believe is false teaching, legalism and persecution in the Church.

I firmly believe that any saint of God of that can separate themselves from the prejudices and man-made traditions for long enough to prayerfully study out what Paul was actually saying to the Corinthians, will see the truth of the matter. Let's take the applicable verses in order, verse by verse.

1 Corinthians 11:3 - *“But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.”*

Paul begins to explain the order of things as ordained by God. He begins by letting them know that Jesus is the head of man and the head of the woman is the man to

begin to explain the proper relationship of men and women that appears to be somewhat out of order with the Church at Corinth.

1 Corinthians 11:4,5 - *“Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head. But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven.”*

Here he goes on to explain the difference between the man in the woman in relationship with God and one another. He is not yet speaking of hair but saying that a man should not have his head covered while praying or prophesying, yet a woman should have her head covered. In fact if a woman does not have her head covered it is as if she were shaven. In other words it's a shame to her just as if it would be if she were shaven. Paul goes on to explain . . .

1 Corinthians 11:6 - *“For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered.”*

Here Paul is talking about a covering that is separate from the hair. But he is saying if she is not covered while she is prophesying or praying it is a shame to her just as it would be if she were shaven or shorn. So if she is not covered let her also be shorn. A close study reveals two things here.

1. Paul is speaking of a covering other than hair and comparing the lack of this covering while praying or prophesying as shameful to a woman as it would be if she were shorn or shaven.
2. He is using the terms shorn or shaven as though they were the same or similar things and indeed they are.

Shorn = 3 times, Cut = 308 times

The word "shorn" is used only three times in the entire collection of books and letters we call the Bible. Each time it is used it is referring to, or relating to something as sheep are shorn. Paul uses "shaven" or "shorn" here as though they were similar or the same thing. Shaving is the removal of all hair to the skin's surface by shaving with a sharp razor-like instrument. Shorn refers to removing all hair or wool by using sheers, cutting as close to the skins surface as possible therefore removing all the hair or wool possible.

Song of Solomon 4:2 - *“Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep that are even shorn, which came up from the washing; whereof every one bear twins, and none is barren among them.”*

This scripture refers to the evenness as when sheep are shorn because they are no longer woolly and uneven but shorn and smooth and even to the appearance having been shorn with all wool removed.

Acts 18:18 - *“And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow.”*

I think we can agree that in this passage Paul has shorn his head as sheep are shorn and therefore removed all his hair with sheers. I don't think anyone would say that he simply trimmed his hair or cut off his split ends. No, he cut off all of his hair with sheers because of his vow.

1 Corinthians 11:6 – *“For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered.”*

This is the third and last place this word shorn is used in the Bible. Any astute Bible scholar looking for the truth can see that Paul is using the terms or actions shorn and shaven as though they were the same or very similar things.

If we want to just find the definition we like that agrees with our own doctrine it is not hard to do. If you look up the word “shorn” in most modern dictionaries you will indeed find as one of the definitions that it means to cut. You can accept this as a vindication if you wish and say “see, I was right” but you would be wrong. Certainly cutting is being done, but the word shorn had a definite meaning in both the Old and New Testaments.

In the Old Testament the word shorn is translated from the Hebrew word “qatsab” pronounced *kaw-tsab*. It's meaning according to Strong's means to cut down or to cut off as in the removal of all. In the New Testament the word shorn is translated from the Greek word “keiro” pronounced *ki'-ro*. It's meaning according to Strong's is 1) to shear: a sheep 2) to get or let be shorn 3) of shearing or cutting short the hair of the head.

Shorn is used in the Bible 3 times, however the word cut is used in the Bible 308

times. If Paul meant that it was a shame for women to cut their hair in any fashion he would have said "cut".

He was not speaking of cutting the hair. He was saying only that a woman should keep her hair long and that it was a shame for women to shave or sheer off all of their hair. Likewise it was a shame for a man to have long hair.

We Have No Such Custom

1 Corinthians 11:16 – *“But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.”*

This verse I believe has confused many and has been grossly misunderstood by most. Over time many words have a different meaning than they did two-thousand years ago. There are two basic definitions for the word “custom” just as there was when Paul wrote this letter to the Corinthians. The first one was “telonion” pronounced *tel-o’-nee-on* in the Greek. It means such as a tax or a toll that is required to be paid. Today this word is used more in reference to a government division that enforces immigration and other laws pertaining to persons and items entering into this county. In some cases items are confiscated and in some cases a tax (custom) is charged.

The other word in the New Testament translated to the word as “custom” is the Greek word “sunetheia” pronounced *soon-ay’-thi-ah*. This is the word that Paul uses above in 1 Corinthians 11:16. This word has also changed somewhat. If you look this up in Strong’s or in just about any dictionary it will give you the modern definition which means being used to, accustomed. However, the Jews were much more stringent with their traditions and customs. A much better word to have been used in this translation would have been rule or law. A custom to the Jews was not just a habit or a tradition, it was required.

The truth of the matter is by our modern definition of the word custom the Church indeed did have a custom of women keeping their hair long and men keeping their hair short. However Paul was saying that if any man appeared to be contentious over it that it was not a rule or a requirement in the Church. It was a good teaching and a practice but Paul did not want the Church to argue over it and get their eyes off what was important. So what has happened today in the Church? Just what Paul was trying to avoid.

Much of the Church has taken a misinterpreted letter written by Paul to the Church

at Corinth with what was intended to be some good teachings for that Church and many have now made it into law. This one improper interpretation and tradition made law alone has caused more division in the Church than any other I can think of.

Laity/Clergy Division

One of the doctrines that originated as perpetrated by the Catholic Church was the Laity and Clergy division in the Church. It was put in place in order to create a class and put the clergy over the laity in the church. It is believed that the word clergy was taken from the Greek word “kleros” pronounced *klay’-ros*. This word is found in 1 Peter 5:13 and was translated as “heritage”. In truth the use of the word does not fit because the Church as a whole is God’s Heritage.

This false teaching still prevails in the Apostolic Pentecostal Church today just as it does in most denominational Churches and the Catholic Church. Most saints (laity) attend services on Sunday morning and evening and an average of one mid-week service. Most saints and visitors come and sit in seats or pews that all face a platform or stage where usually a man in the ministry (clergy) teaches or preaches each service.

In most Apostolic Pentecostal Churches many saints participate to the extent that they sing with the song service, pray when it time to pray and shout when it’s time to shout. Then they leave, perhaps critique the preacher on the way home where they go about their daily lives until it’s time for the next service. This may not be an exact picture of your Church but it’s very close to the truth for the Church overall. But what can you expect, they are the laity and not in the ministry, right?

Wrong! It’s time for the Church of God to WAKE UP and realize that every member, every saint is part of the ministry and the body all having a part, all having a gift, a talent and a portion in the ministry of the Gospel and are members in particular (1 Cor. 12:27).

The Church needs to be empowered to act, to get involved and put to work the gifts that God has given to them.

Every member in particular in the Church of God is in the ministry

Pastor/Teacher

It is interesting how society changes the meanings of words over time. The word “pastor” is no exception. Today if someone asks me what church do I pastor they want to know what church I am the spiritual leader of. If someone enters a Church building and asks “who is the pastor?” they are asking “who is the man in charge?”

How did we get to this definition of what a pastor is? It happened way back during the reformation. The Protestants that left the Catholic Church as led by Martin Luther and others decided not to call their leaders “priests” but rather “pastors”. However, not much changed even to this day. Much of the Catholic tradition was kept and still permeates even the modern Apostolic Pentecostal Churches.

Not surprisingly I have upset a few “Pastors” with this teaching. The Bible speaks of a four-fold ministry and not a five-fold ministry as many refer to it. The five-fold ministry teaching is popular with most “pastors” because it sets them apart from an ordinary teacher. However Paul laid it out quite well:

Ephesians 4:11,12 - And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

It breaks down like this:

1. apostles;
2. prophets;
3. evangelists;
4. pastors and teachers.

By all rules of the English language and grammar, clearly four gifts of ministry. They are even set in order as to what is the greater gift. This is proven out below in I Corinthians 12:28:

1 Corinthians 12:28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

Note that “pastor” is not even mentioned in this passage. It is because it is the same gift as that of a teacher.

Modern Day Pharisees

Paul said that they who compare themselves amongst themselves are not wise (2 Cor. 10:12). Yet much of the Church today has become much like the Pharisees of two-thousand years ago. The Pharisees closely obeyed the law (at least in the public eye). They walked around with the robes praying publicly doing all the right things and dressing the right way under their rules and laws.

Today we have saints in the Church that wear the right clothes that often conform to the law but not in the spirit of the law. The women wear no jewelry, no makeup, do not cut their hair. These are under the law with women often required to keep their hair piled on top of their heads and men required to be clean shaven. Further rules are often imposed as to the color of a garment or style.

Many saints now look upon others in the Church and even those in the world with great prejudice. They gossip amongst themselves of how someone's hair is too short, or someone missed the morning Church service, or someone is not living the life they should be, etc. I am reminded of Luke 18:10-14:

“Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”

Paul said: *“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all*

things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.” 1 Corinthians 13:1-7

Paul also said: *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.”* Galatians 5:22,23

Holiness is a condition of the heart and not of outward appearance. You cannot become holy by your hair style or habits concerning the hair. You cannot become holy by the wearing of the correct apparel. You cannot become holy by acting holy.

True holiness will indeed reflect in ones appearance but not only that, it will also reflect on ones manner and actions and speech.

Women in Ministry

I will be brief on this subject that is discussed and debated much in the Church. The error has more to do with the misconception of what a pastor/teacher is in the Church than anything else. There is every indication that indeed a woman can have ministerial gifts and no evidence to the contrary. However, Paul said that a woman was not to teach or usurp authority over the man (I Timothy 2:12). So the problem is the traditional understanding of what a pastor is.

To summarize a woman can be gifted in ministry and have the gift of pastor teacher in the church. But the gift is not an office of authority over the church and the word pastor is not a title that man should be elevated in the Church.

Assembly

Most church assemblies today use a form of seating referred to as theater seating. If you are going to a place for the sole purpose to hear a particular speaker only or listen to a Christian music concert, etc. then theater seating is preferred and appropriate. However when the church assembles this type of seating should not be used.

Many “pastors” like this type of church seating because it sets up psychological authority. Sitting or standing on a raised platform, standing behind a podium, with the entire congregation facing the speaker, using a microphone (even when there

are only six people in the room all are within twenty feet), etc. are all psychological symbols of authority, headship and control.

Often “pastors” will have their special chair that is strategically located on the platform or stage. Often these chairs are much nicer and or bigger than any other on the stage and often centered and in front so they can be seen by all and all can know that they are in charge.



I once visited a Church where the pastor had five chairs on the platform for the pastors to be sit in. These were all facing the assembly and were center stage right behind the podium. The center chair was a unique leather chair that the pastor sat in every night regardless if he was speaking or not. It was his throne and his place of authority. All other speakers sat in the other chairs. This type of thing happens in too many Churches.

This is not meant to attack those assemblies that use this traditional format. Indeed there are many good men in the ministry that do things in this traditional manner for it is what they were taught and all that they know. It is not difficult to tell what men are true servants and love God’s Church and what men seek to add to their own esteem and be lords over God’s heritage.

When the Church assembles it should assemble around a room (family circle) as so to have all in attendance are able to see each other as well as possible. Much like you might do in your living room with family or guests. In the photo below is a group sitting together of about sixty people, which is larger than the average Apostolic Pentecostal assembly.



Notice that there are no platforms, no seats of authority, no pulpits, no sound system. All are members in particular (1 Corinthians 12:27) and are more free to ask questions to share, to minister, to testify, while being done decently and in order.

The assembly of the church was never intended to be a focus on one man the “pastor” or whoever is speaking or preaching that day. The gifts of ministry were a gift to the Church, not a title or position for a man. A sizable assembly that has only one man gifted as a pastor/teacher is a poor church indeed.

As the Lord would lead let one speak, then another as the Lord would lead. For there is one head who is Jesus Christ our Lord. Let one ask questions publicly that he might learn and let the women keep silent in the Church.

“And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.” (I Corinthians 14:35)

For those of you that attend very large assemblies on Sundays, etc. it is realized that this seating format is not possible and theater seating is usually required. This type of meeting is likened unto a concert or to hear a special speaker. These types of gatherings are wonderful but should not take the place of regular and more frequent assemblies of the local church.

Everyone is part of the Church and are members in particular (1 Cor 12:27) and have a part in ministry. A daily church family life should be active where frequent times of teaching, learning, sharing, prayer and worship are taking place. This is best done in homes (Acts 2:46).

Something should be going on in the church every single day, not just on Sunday and Wednesday evening. Everyone should be involved with reasonable service (Romans 12:1) every single day.

Pulpit

Since the beginning of time man has placed great importance on tangible items and places or what are deemed to have religious significance. While there were types and shadows in the Law and throughout the Hebrew Scriptures, these are gone.

I have often heard the term spoken of in the church as being in, or standing in the pulpit. It is spoken of as though this was reserved for only those worthy and as a holy place. What is normally referred to as the pulpit in these modern times is the podium structure that many preachers use to place their Bibles, notes, water, etc. The microphone is often attached to it and it is often thought of, at least sub-consciously as a place of authority. Virtually no one ever challenges the speaker behind the pulpit with the microphone. In fact I have heard preachers say while they were preaching that if you disagreed, that was okay, they had the mike.

The word pulpit is only used one time in the entire collection of books and letters we call the Bible. In Nehemiah 8:4, Ezra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood so that he could open and read from the book in the sight of all the people. Nothing holy, just a platform built of wood that Ezra could stand on, not behind, not in.

Beards

The man-made law or requirement to be clean shaven as I recall was developed back in the 60's in some of the larger US Apostolic Pentecostal Church organizations. It had to do with the world's perception of what was known then as the "hippie" or "outlaw" type that frequently were bearded. In an attempt to separate them from that element, a rule was put in place that the men should be clean shaven. I have yet to see this rule in print, but it is very well known to exist within some church organizations.

The error in this thinking was in requiring the Church to react to what the world did or did not do. If the world begins to iron their hair flat should we all get perms? God gave man a beard. Even nature tells us that it is more correct for a man to have beard than not.

If you choose to be clean shaven by your tradition then that is fine. However if you choose to have a beard as God gave unto men, that is good also. There is nothing wrong with the keeping of a tradition as long as the tradition does not circumvent or replace the Word of God or made into law and imposed on others.

Let the church not be concerned if a man is clean shaven or is bearded.

Attire

This is another area of legalistic standards where tradition and misinterpreted Old Testament law are imposed on the Church. The main thrust of rule or law is concerning the cut of the garment or cloth as worn by a woman. It is required by this rule or law that a woman must wear a garment known to the modern world as a dress or skirt. Further that it is a sin for a woman to wear any garment cut and fashioned so that they may be similar to or construed as what is known to the modern world as pants, slacks or trousers and that according to this rule of law is reserved for men and therefore men's attire. The scripture quoted to support this doctrine is the Old Testament law found in Deuteronomy 22:5

The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so *are* abomination unto the LORD thy God. – Duet. 22:5

I find it amazing that saints can go to the law concerning some issues, but in others they are quick to say that that is law and we are not under the law. We are either under the law, the whole law, or we are not under the law or any part of it. If you would read all the laws required in just chapter 22 of Deuteronomy then you would perhaps see their folly.

All who have researched this issue in depth know that the cut of a woman's garment and that of a man were very similar during the time when the law was given. No one was wearing pants, slacks or trousers.

It is clear in the law and other teachings throughout the Bible that there is to be a separation of the sexes. Men were to appear and be as men and women as women. It is clear that the forbidding of wearing that which pertaineth to a man was more closely related to women dressing to be as or appear as a man than the wearing of a style of garment or the cut of the cloth.

What is more important than the cut of the cloth or fashion of the garment is modesty. Indeed by my own culture and tradition I do like to see women in full cut dresses. However, I have seen women conform to the letter of the law but not the spirit of the law. Often skirts are so tight that a slit has to be made in the garment to allow the women to be able to walk, the tighter the garment, the higher the slit. Skirts and dresses can be too short; blouses can be too tight, too transparent or too revealing as in low cut or sleeveless.

Dresses and skirts regardless of the length or fullness can be immodest in many situations and vocations that involve heights or climbing or the lifting of the legs. It would be much better that a women wear loose fitting britches, etc. and be covered.

If it was made for a man to wear it pertains to a man and if it was made for a woman it pertains to a woman. There are no dresses made for men and a man should not put on these garments. Men's suits or overalls or work pants, etc. are not made for women and women should not put on these garments. However there are modest slacks or similar cut effeminate garments made for women. I know of no man that would wear them. Interestingly enough this is a very natural thing in the Church with saints. No additional rule or laws are required. It is only in the world that this is perverted.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. – Gal 5:22,23

Tarrying

I have often heard this term used in the Church. It would seem some folks will “tarry” to receive the gift of Holy Ghost for weeks, months and even years until they finally receive the infilling of the Holy Spirit. This concept is not Biblical other than with the original event on the day of Pentecost. The 120 that were initially filled with the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost indeed had tarried (waited) for fifty days for it to come.

It pleased God that this be the day of the initial outpouring of His Spirit. Whether it was due in part to the 120 being in one place and one accord and also being that there would be a great multitude in the city, only God knows.

After the Holy Spirit had come there is to be no more waiting or tarrying. If there be any tarrying or waiting it is that God is waiting on us. It is interesting that this

tarrying happens more in the wealthy countries than almost anywhere else in the world. It is because we are not hungry for God as a people. We have too much wealth and too little time. We are one of the most hedonistic cultures in the world due to our riches. We are spoiled children with little time for God. We half-heartedly repent. We want our cake and eat it too. Often times we want to be filled with God's Spirit but we want our pleasures of this earth as well as to be able to continue in our sin.

Of a truth God wants to infill us with His Spirit more than we want to be filled.

2 Peter 3:9 says that God is *“not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”*

Luke 11:13 says; *“If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?”*

Tarrying is not of God. If you cannot receive the infilling of the Holy Spirit right here and now, this very instant regardless where you are, it is because either you have not come to full repentance or you lack the faith to receive it. There are no other possibilities. All God is looking for is an empty vessel to fill and His pitcher is filled to overflowing spilling all around you waiting for you to hold your empty vessel up to be filled.

Church Buildings

“Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest? Hath not my hand made all these things? Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.”

Acts 7:48-51

There is a man-made tradition in the latter day church carried out from the Catholic and denominational churches. Much of the Church is caught up with building great halls and bigger and better state of the art structures. Great amounts of money are spent on padded pews, carpet, elaborate seating arrangements, platforms, sound systems, audio video equipment, climate control, and on and on. All for a building in which the average attendee spends less than six hours per week.

It would be better used if this money were given to those in need in the Church and the Church meet in homes, a barn or field.

Home Groups

Regardless of the size of your regular Sunday services, everyone in the Church should be involved with at least weekly home group meetings. These can and should be the most beneficial and nourishing to any saint of God. These are best kept as small groups. Hopefully each home group will have at least one gifted pastor/teacher.

It is interesting to note that when Jesus fed the multitude of about five thousand with the five loaves and two fishes, he directed His disciples to have the multitude sit in companies of fifty. This made it easier for the disciples and other helpers to meet the needs of each individual.

This relates very well to the large assembly of hundreds or perhaps thousands. One “head pastor” cannot address the needs of each in attendance. But in small home groups, those in attendance gifted in ministry can council and address the needs of each.

My favorite format for a home group meeting is one that includes and begins with something like a pot luck dinner with anyone that is willing and able to bring a dish. Continuing fellowship should include prayer requests, prayer, praise and worship, singing is wonderful when possible, Bible studies, teaching, discussions, questions and answers and testimonies all in a very open forum are good.

James 5:16 says that we should confess our faults to one another and pray for one another that we might be healed. This is best accomplished in the small home group of true saints that love one another and do not condemn or gossip or backbite but rather lift each other up.

Titles

We would admonish all brethren everywhere to not use their ministries, gifts of function in the church as titles attached to their name setting themselves above others. Let us call each other by name or at most brother or sister. Let us refrain from using titles such as Reverend, Pastor, Bishop, Elder, Minister and Deacon.

It is interesting to note that none of the apostles or even Jesus used titles that commanded respect or set themselves above anyone. There is no division in the church, just members in particular (1 Corinthians 12:27) of one body that has different functions.

The title "Reverend" for example actually means one who is "worthy of reverence".

¹rev·er·end

Pronunciation: 'rev-r&nd, 're-v&-; 're-v&rnd

Function: *adjective*

Etymology: Middle English, from Middle French, from Latin *reverendus*, gerundive of *revereri*

Date: 15th century

1 : worthy of reverence : [REVERED](#)

Source: Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary

There is only one who is worthy of reverence and that is our Lord and Savior, Christ Jesus.

Paul referred to himself always as "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ" (Romans 1:1). He went on to say that he was "called to be an apostle", but that is what he did, it was his ministry and gift from God and not a title that he was to wear for the purpose of demanding respect. All of the gifts of the ministry are just job descriptions or functions of the ministry God gave to us. They are not supposed to be titles or badges to add on to ones name to appear as holy or important or of high spiritual rank to men.

Many have not removed themselves from the traditions and teaching in denominational churches, and from the Roman Catholic Church. The Catholic Church set about to keep the people ignorant and in their place and created this false clergy/laity division that is not Biblical. There is no division in the church and the words clergy and laity do not exist in God's Word.

Those that lead many Oneness Apostolic Pentecostal assemblies today prefer to be called Pastor, Bishop, Reverend, Minister, Elder, Apostle, etc. They have yet to shake this man-made tradition.

"But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant" - Matthew 20:25-27

The word "Pastor" comes from the Hebrew word "ra'ah". It means to pasture, tend, graze, feed. We are servants and are to feed His sheep, to lead His sheep. Not to rule over them. *"The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed; Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."* - I Peter 5:1-4

God never set one man called a "pastor" or by any other title over His church. The ministry of a pastor was a gift God gave to men for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:12). In fact a pastor is one of the lesser ministries. "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues." - 1 Corinthians 12:28. Jesus alone is the head of the church and we as pastors, teachers, evangelists, apostles, profits, are to Minister to the church as servants. Only elders (plural) were set over the local assembly.

We have different ministries and gifts in the church. We can say that I have been called to pastor, or I have been called to evangelize or I am an elder. But let us not use these gifts and functions in the church to set ourselves above one another by using them as titles or positions of honor. Let us work together, each in his calling and our gifts and ministries will make way for themselves.

It is interesting to note that the term pastor as a title or office was first incorrectly applied by Martin Luther rather than to call their church leaders "Priests" as did the Roman Catholic Church. To this day the church has yet to get away from this false teaching and concept. There can be more than one and in fact several pastors in a local assembly, just as there can be several having other gifts of the ministry or gifts of the Spirit.

Money

I will be brief on this issue. Once you understand what the correct role of what a pastor is and how the church should function, it is easy to deal with this issue. Many pastors that read this writing will be alright until they read this portion. This is where I will lose most of them because it hits them where it hurts, their bank account.

Basically I do not believe in the tithing of one tenth of our increase. This was under the law. Rather I believe God owns every single penny and thing we possess.

God does not need our money, it's the professional Christians (modern day pastors) that want it and preach tithing. Most pastors believe that the tithe belongs to them, it is their income. Most of them should go out and get a job and support themselves.

The early Church gave a good example of how the Church should be. They gave up all the things of this world, they sold all that they had and gave to those that had need.

My message to the Church is to stop paying for elaborate buildings and stop supporting professional Christians! Sell the building, sell the boat, sell the camper, sell the excess property and give to those that have need. Help the elderly, the widow, the hungry and the poor.

Church Organizations

One of the hardest lessons for me to learn was to come out from the man-made church organizations. They are breeding grounds for rivalry, competition and political power struggles and corruption. They will do you more harm than good while taking your money for the privilege of being part of their organization, No man needs to be licensed or ordained by any man or organization to preach the gospel. No benefit of fellowship is worth the strife, hardship and infighting I have seen within some of the largest of these organizations.

Church Services

I have received many emails about our Church services and have had people visit looking for a church “building”. I will gather with saints in various homes locally and also attend “services” with saints of various assemblies around the country. While it is true that at one time I was the General Superintendent of an Apostolic Church organization. I now belong to no man-made church organization nor do I hold any title or office in any local assembly. I claim only to be a bondservant of the Lord Jesus Christ and I desire to only serve Him and the Church.

I also receive many emails inquiring if there are any such church services in their area. The traditions are hard to shake that even after reading this work they are still looking for ready-made church “services” somewhere near them that they can “attend” to test the waters so-to-speak.

If saints that are assembling together as described in this writing will provide time and place information I will be happy to begin posting such information on the Apostolic Voice website.

However I would encourage every single saint that desires what I have written about here to simply begin doing it. Invite another couple or two and begin to have meetings in your homes. Jesus said: *“For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”*

This is the true Church.

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