

Wayne Out There (.com)

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Stuff that matters to Wayne

Is the Current Christian Church Biblical?

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As I trudge along my spiritual journey to meet Truth Himself (Jesus is Truth)(remember that famous scene when Pontias Pilate said 'What is truth?") I have now come to what I used to think was small potatoes - the church. I always used to view 'the church' as a kind of vehicle that helps you get to heaven - kind of like how a school is a vehicle that helps you get a better job. It turns out both were lies. Ack! I'm pretty sure I just saw the Pope drive by my front window in a lowered car with tinted windows... Wait Pope Daddy! Let me explain! In both cases, it's about who you become, not where you go that matters and in both cases it's about the people, not about the building. I won't waste my time on the education topic but I am eternally interested in the church and what God thinks about it and my role in it. The purpose of this post is *not* to be divisive and appear heretical. The purpose of this post is an honest search for truth. The cults of the world absolutely love to point out that 'Christianity is full of denominations so it can't be the truth'. Even the Catholic church uses this point. And they are right. It is all messed up and fragmented and not as it appears as the bride that Jesus is coming back for - without wrinkle or blemish. This current church is blemished up the kahuna! I have no idea what that means by the way... Before I hack away like an angry health inspector on all the issues that I see with the current 'church machine', I'd like to first acknowledge that problems had already arisen and been identified in the body of Christ throughout the new testament. Sometimes I like to point to the first church as a model but it wasn't without problems either. Nor should that be surprising. Satan is on a full attack against the Truth. Satan has little interest in deceived organizations. They are already his. So from Revelations 2-4 kind of range (I'm too lazy to look it up) the body of Christ already had the following major issues that Jesus was giving first hand warnings about:

- false apostles
- deeds of Nicolaitans (whatever that means)(probably liberal Canadian views on everything)
- eating food sacrificed to idols
- fornication/sexual immorality
- dead religion (church zapped of everything)
- lukewarm lazy slobs in need of nothing from God

I kind of paraphrased but whatever - read it on your own dime. Here are the issues I see with the current church machine:

Elevated Role of the Pastor

Ephesians 4:11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers In the above list you will note there are five (5) key roles that God gives people. The current pastor is expected to be all five which is bad for him, and bad for you - and it's not from God. Side effects from this lop-sided spiritual distribution may be:

- excessive stress on the pastor
- top-down incorrect theology trickling down
- controlling and manipulation

Salaried Pastor

It seems that the default position of the pastor is to be salaried, instead of defaulting to tent-maker. I have no idea where this one came from. To me this is just illogical and bad business. When you start a business, the co-founders starve and flip burgers at night until there is enough customer base to generate their income. If they don't do this, investors will look at the operation and ask why they should be funding their steak dinners and car payments. Sorry to be so nasty on this topic but I read in the Bible that Paul made tents so his salary wasn't a burden on the church. That's biblical. The side effects from a salaried pastor may be:

- pressure to take up more offerings
- pressure to focus too much on the offering
- pressure to teach the old testament tithe as new testament law
- Guilt on the pastor for being a burden on what may be a small group (I assume this?)
- temptation *not* to preach messages that might offend the people who drop the largest offerings
- temptation to preach endless messages on financial giving
- temptation to do what the elders or other board members think is best even if it's not God
- etc

Again, to me this is just basic business. I have no problem giving a salary to any God-serving man or woman but it has a long list of potential dangers that I believe are to be avoided. Just to be fair, the argument *for* the salaried pastor is to free this person up for the full time work of the ministry.

No Hard Preaching

The Bible is full of hard truths. Pornography, for example, is both idolatry and fornication and divorce is unbiblical and damaging to everyone involved. Oh, and of course the ever-distracting theme of homosexuality. The only time that one is preached is when it's being preached against and the impending destruction on our world like Sodom and Gomorrah. Fair enough! That's true. But isn't it exciting to think that we can actually be the ones to help all these people above get free and HEALED!!???????? I know! Make me walk the plank! What a rebel rouser! Excommunicate him! Firing squad! Sheeeeeeeesh. If a full-blown sinner involved in, let's just say fornication or adultery, can sit comfortably in your church for a few weeks, you need to seriously question which parts of the Bible you are preaching (or not preaching). But we can't just preach them out without letting them know there is a glorious freedom to be had. The best day of my life was my born-again birthday when I realized the chains of my sins were broken and powerless over me and my relationship with God.

Elevated Physical Position of the Pastor

This section may just be my opinion (warning). Not sure why this bugs me but I have always been bothered by the uni-directional, slightly elevated position of the pastor. Usually there are a few risers and then a big pulpit. Then off to the side is the rock band. It just always seems like a 'show'. I suppose it comes from the need to project the voice and hear everything in times past. It's probably that simple. But it feels like a university lecture hall with a rock band. Who in the world participates or interacts with those? Answer: No one. And if you do, the other people don't like you for interrupting the speaker. So, I suppose if the whole goal of 'church' is to show up and hear a uni-directional message from the Bible without interruption, then mission accomplished. But what if the pastor is preaching something that is totally off base? What if something is burning inside of you from the Holy Ghost and God is telling you to share it with His people? What if you are a prophet and this message must get out? I'm sure God will forgive you for not wanting to interrupt the speaker for the sake of order. Plus, you could email it to the mailing list after... HA?

Elevated Physical Position of the Worship Team

The more I look at what satan is doing in the secular world with music and idolatry, the more I am concerned about this 'worship team'. I saw a trailer for an upcoming movie on a secular kids DVD this week. Out of the corner of my eye I saw a bunch of tattooed hipsters with nasty haircuts, torn jeans and the like jumping around on a stage with all sorts of acid-induced lighting. Had I not seen the words of

the song on the screen behind them I would have surely thought this was a secular rock concert. Every part of it looked secular. It just kind of creeped me right out. That's all. It was one of those 'this is wrong' moments. I don't want to dwell on the 'christians looking like the world' topic but the 'rock band' thing really seems to be established in the weekly worship. My idea was always 'what would happen if we stuck the band BEHIND the congregation and started worshipping? My guess is that no one would know what to do or how to worship - which is just plain disturbing. Disclaimer: I have not run the test to check!

Boxed Lunch Set Meal

I also like to call this 'compartmentalized faith'. It's also known as 'the Sunday Christian'. It's the packaging up of our faith into nice little sections of our life, right down to the way we perform our 'service' (which by the way 5% of the people serve and 95% are served by the 5%). It looks a little bit like this: quiet music, intro prayer, praise and worship team rock out, optional hymn(s) here, main prayer, sermon, closing prayer, optional communion here, the blessing prayer thing, a little more quiet music, hand shaking, optional meals, departures. Repeat next week. Sometimes in between there might be a prayer meeting or a cell group meeting but not usually. All of the above is fine, per se, but I double-dog DARE any of you to try to change ANY of it. I DARE you to listen to that still quiet voice inside of you and obey it and see what happens. From my experience, the program dominates. As a quick example, God might be leading the praise and worship team to continue. After all, in heaven all we are going to do is worship God so maybe we should practice this blessed skill here a little more. But if the clock says to stop and God says to continue..... who will win? So, in conclusion, the program, the compartments and the order seems to win. I want to also declare that I love order and habitual things can be very good. It's very good to wake up with an alarm clock and read your Bible. But these things cannot rule over the voice of the Living God and prevent our obedience to Him. I do boldly declare that the church has become 'meeting focused' not 'Christ focused'.

Lacking Discipleship

This again is not really the 'fault' of the pastor or 'the church' per se, but a cumulative result of the reliance on the Boxed Meal Comfort Syndrome (BMCS). It's much more comfortable to commit to one or two hours per week. It's much more comfortable to not open our ugly closets of sin and selfishness to our brothers. It's much more comfortable not to look at their closets. It's much more comfortable to not pray with others and hence not be responsible for watching a failed prayer. It's much more comfortable to walk by programs than by faith. It's very comfortable to be a modern day Christian in a first world country and I'm no exception. But Jesus said these troubling yet exciting words: Go ye therefore, and teach all nations (most translations say 'making disciples of all nations'), baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. (Matthew 28:19) Jesus' disciples didn't wake up one day and know everything. They lived and breathed the Living Word and then put into daily practice the command of living out the commandments. We are to spend time and mentor others the same way that Jesus did with them. That's our model and it works. If the business world has figured it out maybe it's time for the church to revisit this one?

Limited Bible Knowledge

I'll keep this one short and simple. It's shocking how little the people in your church know about what's really in the Bible. All of the above explains it though. But no wonder we are led to and fro by every wind of doctrine and food for the wolves.

Superficial Relationships

This is typically a by-product of the Boxed Lunch Meal above. It's very, very difficult to build meaningful and deep relationships if the only chance we have to do so is at the handshake and departure section of the Sunday meeting. Many people are surprised to learn of sudden divorces, pornography addictions, adultery and more. Why are you surprised? You don't even know these people beyond a handshake. If you were in their lives I'm very confident that God would have shown you the red flags waving and used you in some amazing way. But you just saw their surface smile, not their dark broken insides. I also feel that this is one of the reasons why the love is disappearing at an alarming rate from the church and why

believers are turning to every other form of deception. If true Christ-like love flowed like a river amongst your body of believers (the church) you would hunger and thirst for their fellowship.

Programs Programs Programs

This is another by-product of the Boxed Lunch Meal above. The only way to deal with the scriptures that the Bible talks about related to outreach and work while maintaining the church machine system in it's current state is to create programs that fit within that system. I'm very glad for the good deeds being done, but I have to be honest. I don't want a program. I want a relationship with God Almighty and I'm pretty sure the people on the receiving end of the program do too. So, as long as that is the goal and every single person in the group is going down this road, halleluyah! But a lot of people use 'programs' to appease their conscience which knows that they are not growing in Christ, nor doing the works themselves. So they fund a program or join a few times here and there.

In Bed with Big Brother

This topic is interesting. It seems as though either the church hasn't thought of this or doesn't know. As mentioned in another one of my articles, if you would like to see what any church (or charity) has done with their money in Canada, all you need to do is click this link to our friends at the CRA and take a peek. Here, [try for yourself](#). Enter your favourite church's name and watch the results! That's downright disturbing for so many reasons, but if you are familiar with the mark of the beast in Revelation, that might be a good place for you to start your research. The church signed up for that deal, no question, and if any persecutions started one could simple shut down the church.... except for one problem: Everyone who has ever given money to said organization for the bliss of a tax receipt is also now linked by their social insurance number (SIN) which is linked to this blissful believers home address. If I were a man given to fear, that would be scary.... It seems to me as though wisdom would call the Body of Christ to seriously and quickly question whether this is in the best interest of themselves or their congregation but I have a strange hunch that this will be a very tricky habit to break free from if one were to try. Those tax deductions are like catnip to a cat.

Christmas and Easter Focused

I've done lots of writing on this topic and you can search this blog for it. I'm kind of bored of the topic. I have decided both Christmas and Easter have nothing to do with Jesus and should not be a focus. Yet every church focuses on these two days. Enough said. Do your own research and come to your own conclusions.

Non-Local Congregations

This is another smaller point but I just want to point out that in the current church machine many well meaning people burn a lot of gas driving to congregations. I feel that the more local we are, the more relevant we are. Simple as that.

Sunday Worship

Another small one. I know the 'day' doesn't matter, per se, but it's just kind of weird that Christians meet on Sunday and not Saturday which was the sabbath. I don't want to spend too much time or energy on this but it is worth at least asking 'why', isn't it? Sun? Day? Why? And that just about wraps up what I thought was going to be a 20 minute post. I have now grown older and grey and my bladder is about to explode so I must bid thee farewell, thou who readeth. Blessings to you.

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