



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

Issue 135

Why I Left the Organized Church

A Personal Testimony

by – Ken Eckerty

I have been a Christian now for almost 23 years. I have been to many different denominations ranging from Baptist to Assembly of God. I have been to churches with a broad range of theological beliefs. I have been an Arminianist, a Calvinist, a dispensationalist, a fundamentalist, and a pre- and post-tribulationist (if you don't know what these terms mean, don't worry – you're not missing anything). I have studied systematic theology and have been a literalist for most of my Christian life. I have been a member of various churches, taken membership classes, pledged agreement to doctrinal statements, and given public testimony of such.

However, through a series of very difficult circumstances in my life, God began to shake the very core of my beliefs. My belief system over the years was based on fallible men and systems, and changed as frequently as I changed churches. I had book knowledge of God, but my understanding of His character was theologically, not experientially based. Of course, this is not to say that the study of the Scriptures is not important. However, when intellectualism takes the place of spirituality, then study has become an idol. Denominationalism had clouded my vision and given me a skewed perspective of God's love and the purpose of His judgments.

What God has done in my life is to take a very prideful, arrogant, self-righteous man and strip him of self-achievement and self-exaltation. I began to see all my theology crumble before my eyes. I saw that much of the knowledge I had accumulated was simply the "traditions of men" which took me away from

the central truth of "Christ in me, the hope of glory." Through the brokenness of the Cross, I no longer wanted to impress men with my so-called "knowledge of the Scriptures."

At the same time, God was revealing to me the glorious revelation of Christ being "all in all." I saw that I was a very religious man – a Christian, yes – but a religious one. My focus was on ministry, or activities, or preaching, or singing. I had left the simplicity of Christ as my first love. Christ was not everything to me. Ministry was more important; going to church was more important; my reputation was more important; and as important as studying the Scriptures are, studying had become more important than Christ Himself.

Almost instantly, God had set me free from denominationalism. I began to see denominations as hurtful divisions in the body of Christ. The Apostle Paul spoke of these divisions when he asked, "Is Christ divided?" (I Corinthians 1:13). I began to realize that becoming a member of a denomination was helping to contribute to the division in the body of Christ. Denominations, by their very nature, exclude others. To join a church, one must pledge an allegiance to a set of doctrines and creeds that might be very much different than the church down the street.

(continued next page)

Why I Left the Organized Church – A Personal Testimony.....	1401
Is God Schizophrenic?.....	1405
Mystery Babylon – Select Readings on the Religious System, Part I.....	1407

(continued from previous page)

So which church is right? By being an active member of the Baptist or Methodist church, I saw that I was condoning and encouraging an exclusive spirit. Should I be baptized in the name of Christ? OR the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit? Do I need to speak in tongues or not? Is water baptism required for salvation? Should I or shouldn't I tithe? Is Christ coming back before or after the tribulation? Can I lose my salvation or am I secure forever?

While I have personal beliefs on each of the above questions, I saw that to make these into a doctrinal statement and make agreement to them a prerequisite for "joining the church" was wrong. First of all, the whole idea of church membership is unbiblical. When we become Christians, we instantly become members of the body of Christ (the ecclesia). These modern membership requirements are nothing more than adding to what Christ has already done for us. Because we are "in Christ," we are already members of the ecclesia.

I also began to see that Christ has become second place in most churches. Christ has lost the preeminence. What has replaced Him? Activities, for one; ministries for another. We are so busy "for" Christ that we have forgotten that to "be with" Christ is the better thing.

Remember the story of Mary and Martha? Martha was so busy serving Christ that she forgot that Mary, who was sitting at the feet of Jesus, had the better thing. Jesus never condemned Martha for being a server. Service is important – but only when that service flows from our intimacy with Christ. Anything less is idolatry. We have made our ministries and our activities into little idols. If you doubt what I am saying, simply read the newspaper advertisements for our churches or look at the church bulletin. Most churches try to draw people by boasting of all the activities and ministries that are made available – ministries for the children, ministries for the young adults, and ministries for the married. There are activities going on all the time. Are we so bored with real intimacy with each other that we have to look for alternatives to fill our time?

I often wonder, though, how many of these ministries Jesus has really blessed? I knew a pastor who had recognized this problem and called on the congregation to put a halt to all ministries and activities and pray about what the Lord would have them to do. Unfortunately, most of the church as well as the elders and deacons did not see this as necessary. You see, this particular

Bible Student's Notebook

ISSN: 1936-9360

No. 135 – May 7, 2008

This weekly publication (52 times a year) is dedicated to:

- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7)
- the affirmation of God's purpose to save all mankind through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3, 4; 4:10; Titus 2:11)
- the "preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began" (Romans 16:25)
- true freedom and liberty apart from the law (Galatians 5:1)
- the organic nature of the church, the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12)
- the distinct ministry of Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles (Romans 11:13)
- the importance of receiving all whom Christ has received (Romans 14-15)
- the recovery of rich Biblical truth that has too long remained hidden under the veils of traditionalism, prejudice, misunderstanding, and fear (Mark 7:7, 13).
- the completeness of the believer in Christ (Colossians 2:10), with ...
 - total forgiveness of sins (Colossians 1:14)
 - identity in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6)
 - adult sonship position (Galatians 4)

This publication is a joint effort of a few members of the body of Christ. It is a product of our individual lives and ministries together. We do not claim infallibility for its contents. Our readers are asked to be as the Bereans and search the Scriptures (Acts 17:10-11; I Thessalonians 5:21).

This publication is not connected with any "church," "denomination," "movement," "organization," "mission," "creed," "meeting," "school," "conference" or "fellowship."

SUBSCRIPTION

Electronic Version (e-mailed to you): 1 Year (52 issues) – \$10; 2 Years (104 issues) – \$20
Printed Version (mailed to you): ½ Year (26 issues) – \$25;
1 Year (52 issues) – \$50

PATRIARCHS

Remember that it is our responsibility as husbands and fathers to take the truths we learn from God's Word, the truths that we hold dear, and impart them to our families.

The Bible Student's Notebook
PO Box 265, Windber, PA 15963
Office: (800) 784-6010

bsn@studyshef.com
www.BibleStudentsNotebook.com

Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr. – Editor
Andre Sneidar – Managing Editor
Rick Lemons – Associate Editor

Visit our online bookstore at: www.StudyShelf.com

Copyright © 1989-2008 Pilkington & Sons

church had made ministry an idol. They could not let go of their busy-ness.

Perhaps the biggest problem with the organized system is their emphasis on the Old Covenant. The thing that really opened up my eyes to this issue was the way the church is emphasizing the Old Testament practice of tithing. Most churches teach that it is biblical that a person give at least ten percent to the church, and anything above this amount is considered an “offering.” However, tithing is totally foreign to the New Testament ecclesia, and to insist otherwise is to take the law and mix it with grace. This legalistic spirit also manifests itself in most sermons today. Instead of putting an emphasis on the life of Christ working in and through us, more emphasis is placed on the keeping of commandments and “doing,” and as a result, the poor sheep are working and working to stay right with God, but in reality, the exact opposite is happening. The saints are feeling more and more guilty because they are not living up to the expectations and requirements of their church; and this is exactly why Paul wrote to the Galatians. They had begun in the Spirit but were being perfected in the flesh, and Paul warns that they were in danger of nullifying the work of Christ (Galatians 3:3; 5:2; Romans 4:14). It is no wonder that our churches are so weak and impotent – they have replaced the Cross with the “golden calf” of works.

Another major problem I see in the organized church is the pre-eminence of the pastorate. Predominantly, denominations are centrally focused around one man – the pastor. Some churches have more than one man in charge called a “plurality of elders.” While this is more scriptural, total control usually ends up in the hands of one or two men. This was not the case with the early ecclesia. Emphasis was placed on each individual member contributing to the building up of the body of Christ. Church meetings involved all the members, not just one or two (I Corinthians 14:26; Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 4:16). Elders and deacons were overseers and servants. They did not lord over the flock of God, and they did not have titles or offices as we do today. They were gifted men who functioned in the gift of being an elder.

Today we have professionally paid clergy, and so as a result, it is usually one man’s responsibility to ensure the flock is fed and built up, and why not – isn’t that what he’s paid to do? The direction and vision of the local church is usually the pastor’s specific vision. Oftentimes, this quenches the Spirit of God working in individual believers. If there is a conflict on the

direction the local church should take, the pastor’s direction usually wins out.

One local pastor I know is very proud of the fact that he is a pastor. Frequently, I’d hear him say, “My church this, and my church that” – and therein lies the problem. There is an ownership issue here. Ownership of the local assembly, which should belong to Christ Himself, has been usurped and taken from Him by men. I do not mean to imply that these men are less than sincere or do not love the Lord. It is easy for all of us to claim the right of something that does not belong to us.

Today’s modern church has become very much like a business. It has a tax-exempt status. It has a board of directors, leadership council, or some other governing body to rule its affairs. It conducts business meetings with voting procedures. It involves itself in building funds with various committees designed to make decisions for the congregation. It has constitutions, by-laws, and a doctrinal statement very much like big corporations today. It raises money – and lots of it. Pastors and church employees earn salaries much like a corporation. Much of the money collected from the offerings go to pay salaries, mortgages (or rent), and other business-type expenses (janitorial, lawn maintenance, secretarial, etc.). This business-like mentality was far removed from the spirit of the early Church.

The early Church did not maintain buildings, or pay salaries to their leaders. Their money went to minister to the needs of each other and to feeding the poor. Can you imagine what we could do as a Church if we took all the money that goes to pay salaries and maintain buildings and gave it to the poor? This country would no longer need government welfare, because the Church would become the welfare system. What an impact the Church would have on our society!

Finally, our doctrinal statements have excluded many Christians from fellowship simply because they do not agree with every fine point of such statements. “Orthodoxy” is determined by “the few” and expected to be followed by the majority.

For example, because my belief on the final destination of man is different than the majority of most churches, many have cut me off from fellowship. I have been labeled a heretic by some and am avoided by many. Never mind the fact that I believe that salvation is by grace through faith alone in the blood of Jesus.

Never mind the fact that I believe that Jesus is the only name by which men can be saved. Never mind the fact that I believe that Christ rose on the third day and will come again. Never mind the fact that I preach the Lordship of Jesus Christ and glory only in His Cross.

Because I do not agree with the modern church that most of God's creation will burn in hell forever, I have been labeled a heretic unworthy of fellowship. This should not be! The basis of our fellowship is not in some set of creeds that vary from church to church. The basis of our fellowship is Christ and Him alone!

"Any man that confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God, and no man can say that Jesus is Lord but by the Holy Spirit" (I John 4:2-3; I Corinthians 12:3).

This, and this alone, is our basis of fellowship.

In conclusion, my intent in writing this short article is to answer some of my friends and family who are concerned because I am not "going to church."

I will not question any person's choice of where they worship with the saints. That is between them and the Lord. While I strongly believe that denominations divide the Body and are not God's best, the Lord surely uses them in the lives of His people. If you feel that you are called to attend a Baptist, a Methodist,

(continued from page 1406)

of the Bible! Do we not see that God is always love? The Scriptures declare that His mercy endures forever (Psalms 136), His anger is but for a moment (Psalms 30:5), He will not cast off forever (Lamentations 3:31), He retains not His anger forever, but delights in mercy (Micah 7:18), His tender mercies are above all His works (including His judgments) (Psalms 145:9), His love never fails (I Corinthians 13:8), and above all, He is love (I John 4:8)!

To understand all the passages in the Bible that relate to God's judgments, wrath, and vengeance, we must view everything God does in the light of His love. If we understand that God does nothing apart from His love, then we understand that His judgments are but a means to bring us back to Himself (Psalms 99:8; Isaiah 4:4; 26:9). Man is incapable of being both love and justice at the same time, but the True God is both perfect love and perfect justice – at the same time! God is perfect holiness, and as such, He must deal with sin. But He is also perfect love, so anything God does must

or a Presbyterian church, do what you believe God is leading you to do. But for me, I cannot participate in a system that I feel has left the spirit of the New Testament ecclesia.

This does not mean that I will never step foot inside a church building again, and it certainly doesn't mean that I will reject those who choose to fellowship in these denominations. It simply means that I will not become a member or give my energies to further any denominational system, or propagate the ministry of one man. God uses us wherever we are, and it is true that He has used the denominational system to accomplish His great purpose, but just because God uses something in our lives, that doesn't mean that He wishes us to stay there. There comes a time when we should move from "milk" to "strong meat."

We all should be growing and progressing in our walk with the Lord. Sometimes that means taking a stance and risk being labeled "different." I was in the denominational system for over 20 years before God called me out. I know many believers who have felt the same urging by the Spirit. They, too, have suffered the same label as I have. One day, however, God will call ALL of us out of man-made religion (denominationalism) and into the perfect unity of His Spirit. Until that day, may all of us learn to love one another and maintain the bond of peace. ■

demonstrate both. We cannot separate God's justice from His love otherwise we create a schizophrenic god with two very different and contradictory personalities.

And while the majority of the Church believes that God has two different personalities, we have a better testimony in the scriptures.

"God's love will never fail!" (I Corinthians 13:8).

"Abides these three: faith, hope, and love; but the greatest is love." (I Corinthians 13:13).

We can trust that the true God of the Bible is the "Savior of all men" (I Timothy 4:10) and that His judgments are righteous altogether.

May all of us come to know the wondrous love that God has for ALL men – now and unto the ages of ages – and beyond! ■

Is God Schizophrenic?

by – Ken Eckerty

Ask any Christian why they believe God will torment people forever, and you'll usually get the response, "God loves all men, but He is also just." While it is certainly true that God is both love and justice, modern theology perverts both of these wonderful attributes of God by creating a dualistic natured god – a god incapable of loving and executing His justice at the same time.

The Bible declares in I John 4:8 that "God is love." When the Apostle John was thinking of a perfect phrase to describe God's love, notice he didn't say, "God is loving." All of us know that God does loving acts, but to John, this description was insufficient to describe the depths and perfection of the love of God. Humans are capable of showing love, but God is much more than man. John was saying that God is more than just loving deeds. He "is" love. In other words, the very essence (or character) of God "is love." He is always love – 24/7. In every circumstance and in every place, "God is love." There is no time, ever, when God is not love. Do you believe this? The Bible gives us a beautiful description of God's love in I Corinthians 13.

"Love is patient and kind. Love knows neither envy nor jealousy. Love is not forward and self-assertive, nor boastful and conceited. Love does not behave unbecomingly, nor seek to aggrandize (boast of greatness) itself, nor blaze out in passionate anger, nor brood over wrongs. It finds no pleasure in injustice done to others, but joyfully sides with the truth. It knows how to be silent. It is full of trust, full of hope, full of patient endurance."

When reading the above passage, try this: every time the word "love" is used, take it out and replace it with the word "God." Since God "is" love, God is also patient and kind. He also is not envious or jealous. He is not forward and self-assertive, nor boastful and conceited. He does not behave unbecomingly, nor seeks to make His name great at the expense of others. He does not blaze out in passionate, uncontrolled anger, nor broods over wrongs.

Let us now look at the doctrine of eternal torment in the light of the great truth concerning God's great love.

If it is true that God is always love (and He is!), how do we then explain the doctrine of eternal torment? One hard-line reformer, Jonathan Edwards wrote, "Hell is God's perfect hatred without love." Edwards knew that the doctrine of never-ending punishments was incompatible with God's love, which is why he had to remove any suggestion that God's love could reach into the lowest "hell." But how can this be? If God can do nothing apart from His love, how do we explain the fact that God supposedly torments most of His creation for all eternity for no apparent purpose? If God's punishments never end, then what purpose do they hold for the offender – what betterment to the sinner? If there is no intent on correcting the behavior of the offender, then the only purpose this punishment could serve would be to either satisfy God's own sense of justice or to teach the poor sinner an "eternal" lesson. And in either case, this would be a selfish act because God would be thinking solely of Himself. God could not have the best interest of the sinner at heart if His punishments continued without end. Isn't love being concerned for the welfare of another? I Corinthians 13:5 says, "Love (God) seeks not its (His) own things." The very essence of love is the idea that it is purely unselfish – it seeks not its own. If God acts in a manner prescribed by the majority of the Church by torturing most of His creation forever – with no thought whatsoever of rehabilitation for the sinner – how then can this be love? As an earthly father, no matter how bad and rebellious my children act, I could never punish them simply out of anger and vengeance – for to do so would be selfish and unloving. And if I did, could it be said that I truly loved my children? If I inflict severe pain on my children simply to teach them a lesson, with absolutely no intent on correcting their behavior, what kind of father would I be? And what kind of Father would God be if He acted in this same manner? God would not be a loving God if He acted thus toward most of His created beings. Does an earthly parent have more capacity to love than God? What loving parent on the face of the earth would ever do (to their own children) the kinds of horrors that Christians ascribe to God? Isn't God's love far greater than the love that earthly parents have for their own children? The idea of "eternal" hell shows that we believe in a god who acts simply to satisfy his own need for justice and revenge. And if this is the case,

then God is NOT love, at least to the great majority of those He torments “eternally.”

If the Bible is true when it says that God is love – then God must love at all times – not just in this short lifespan He gives us. Didn’t Jesus Himself tell us to love our enemies (Matthew 5:44)? Didn’t Paul teach us that if our enemies hunger and thirst, we should give them food and drink (Romans 12:20)? Does this only apply to a man’s short lifespan on the earth? Does God’s love stop after a man dies?

An acquaintance of mine tried to defend the doctrine of “eternal” torment by saying that “God only loves in memory – not physically.” I’m not even sure what that is supposed to mean. Where is that in the Bible? Doesn’t the apostle John tell us to “... *love not in word only, but in deed and truth*” (I John 3:18)? How can God only love in memory, and not in deeds?

Some justify the lie of “eternal” torment by saying that “God’s ways are higher than ours.” In other words, “God can do whatever He pleases and it is not our business to question God.” God can certainly do whatsoever He pleases to whomever He pleases. However, in anything God does, He cannot contradict His own Word. If God commands us to love and forgive “*seventy times seven*” and show love to our most hated enemy, then God must do the same. God will never expect us to do something that He Himself isn’t willing to do. If God tells us to keep on forgiving, then God will also keep forgiving – even after this life is over.

In order to get around the irrefutable fact that God “is” always love, theologians have invented what I like to call the “Doctrine of Schizophrenia.” They teach that “God is love, but He is also judgment, and therefore, God must forever turn His back on the unrepentant sinner.” Without admitting it, Christians actually agree with the words of Jonathan Edwards who, in order to justify an “eternal” hell, had to separate God’s judgment from His love. To Jonathan Edwards, “hell” was the absence of the love of God. In actuality, Edwards’ view of “hell” is quite correct if the Bible teaches never-ending punishments. The hypocrisy of this “schizoid” theology pits one side of God against the other instead of seeing that God’s judgments work “hand in glove” with His love in order to accomplish His purposes. Modern theology can’t admit that the doctrine of “eternal” torment makes God into someone who cannot love after a man dies. At least Jonathan Edwards had the honesty (and guts) to admit what he really believed. To those reading this who believe in

the doctrine of never-ending punishments – can you admit that there will come a time when God can no longer love?

The modern church embraces two gods – a god of love, and a god of judgment. This god of love can only love those who “accept” him in this life. But if a man is unfortunate enough to die at a young age without Christ, or he is born in a Muslim country, or he rejects Christianity based on the hypocrisy of so-called Christians, or he simply isn’t “smart” enough to choose Christ over the thousands of sects and religions each claiming to be Truth – then look out! This god of love transforms himself into a god of judgment. No longer can this god love. No longer can he reach out to his enemies. No longer can he show any mercy or respond to the cries of those who are lost. Most of Christendom believes that this god of judgment throws most of his creation into eternal flames and then turns his back on them despite their screaming, and their cries for mercy. And this god of justice will continue to turn a deaf ear to all those people whom he created – forever and ever.

What an ugly, and hideous theology we have devised! Some men, like St. Augustine, actually claim that those who are sentenced to this never-ending torture chamber will actually be content to stay in that state for all eternity, and because of their contentment in “hell,” God won’t have to show His love mercy and love.

And, of course, there is always the great theology of John Calvin who believed little innocent babies would also be tossed into the tormenting flames because they had the misfortune of being born with a sin nature.

To believe in the doctrine of “eternal” torment, one must believe one of two things about God’s love. Either God stops loving those whom He throws in the lake of fire, or “eternal” torment is, in fact, God’s love in action. If you believe the former, then God IS NOT love to the men He tortures; in essence you deny I John 4:8. If you believe the latter, you have changed the beautiful love of God into a sick and twisted thing – a thought so repulsive it is not even worthy of any additional discussion.

My dear friend, can you not see what a terrible lie this is? Do you really believe that God has two different personalities – one moment He acts out of love, and the next He is vengeful wrath showing no mercy and love whatsoever? Thank goodness, this is not the God
(continued on page 1404)

Mystery Babylon

Select Readings on the *Religious System*

(Part 1)

"... Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and the abominations of the earth" (Revelation 17:5).

A FALSE CONCEPTION

In some communities there remains, as a vestige of a false conception of the church building ... the idolatry of bricks and mortar, a heresy specifically undermined by the Apostle Paul in Athens when he said, "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands" (Acts 17:24) ...

As Christians, we believe in the Real Presence, but it is a severe denial of the divine power to claim that this Presence is limited geographically.

Elton Trueblood (1900-1994)
The Incendiary Fellowship (1967)

NOT AN INSTITUTION, BUT A PEOPLE

The church as Jesus established it is not an institution, but a people in whom He lives and works. Instead of a channel through which He can flow, some have turned it into a reservoir that stores up water – or worse, an institution that must be preserved.

Ed Dobson (with Cal Thomas)
Blinded by Might: Can the Religious Right Save America? (1999), page 148

SO MUCH WASTE

There is probably not another field of human activity where there is so much waste as in the field of religion ...

In the average church we hear the same prayers repeated each Sunday year in and year out with, one would suspect, not the remotest expectation that they will be answered. It is enough, it seems, that they have been uttered. The familiar phrase, the religious tone, the emotionally loaded words have their superficial and temporary effect ... Yet every Sunday morning

for twenty years he goes through the same routine and, allowing two hours for him to leave his house, sit through a church service and return to his house again, he has wasted 170 twelve-hour days with this exercise in futility.

A.W. Tozer (1897-1963)
Born After Midnight, pages 100-101

RELIGION: A TERRIBLE FORCE

Religion can be, and is very largely, a terrible force; and Christianity has become a religion. There are very few communities of Christians – who wholly escape the tendency or propensity to persecute or ostracize other Christians who might be regarded as rivals in *their* field of activity. All the talk about "sheep-stealing" has little or nothing to do with stealing from *the* fold of *the* Shepherd, but only relates to some private religious fold of *organized* Christianity.

T. Austin-Sparks (1888-1971)
God Hath Spoken

SHIMMERING PERSONALITIES

In this day when shimmering personalities carry on "the Lord's work" after the methods of the entertainment world it is refreshing to associate for a moment even in the pages of a book with a sincere and humble man ...

With Bibles under their arms and bundles of tracts in their pockets, religious persons now meet to carry on "services" so carnal, so pagan, that they can hardly be distinguished from the old vaudeville shows of earlier days.

A.W. Tozer (1897-1963)
Of God and Men, pages 16-18

THE GREAT GODDESS NUMBERS

The great goddess Numbers is worshiped with fervent devotion and all things religious are brought before her for examination. Her Old Testament is the financial report and her New Testament is the membership roll. To these she appeals as arbiters of all questions, the test of spiritual growth and the proof of success or failure in every Christian endeavor.

A little acquaintance with the Bible should show this up for the heresy it is. To judge anything spiritual by statistics is to judge by another than scriptural judgment. It is to admit the validity of externalism ... It is to mistake the old creation for the new and to confuse things eternal with things temporal. Yet it is being done every day ... And hardly anyone notices the deep and dangerous error.

A.W. Tozer (1897-1963)
The Set of the Sail, page 153

CLERICAL ORDINATION

Even though Protestants no longer consider ordination as a sacrament, they nevertheless prove unable to extricate themselves from some ideas inherent in Romanism.

G.A. Chan
The Babylonian Captivity of the Church
The Trinity Review #153

A FORMER PASTOR SPEAKS

Why do I have to work? Why am I not traveling around the world, preaching this message? Because someone has to live it before it can be preached ...

“The church” is a whore – some say “the whore of Babylon.” Perhaps so; but certainly, it is an institution run by hirelings, for hirelings (from which, in its etymology, we get the word “whore” = “hore” = “hire”). It is based upon entertainment and the psychology of fantasy ... pretensions, manipulation, and therapy. It is not a healthy situation and probably represents the efflorescence of death.

Find someone to love and someone who will love you back, and then do things together. Don't waste your time on “church” groups thinking you are “giving something back.” ... As soon as you are used up, they will find someone else to take your place.

You want a preacher for your funeral? Fine, if you think

that means something. I would rather have my children bury me ... I don't want a hireling to bury me.

James Wesley Stivers
September 2005

ROMAN VESTMENTS

And if you think that Protestantism has rid itself of Roman vestments, look at the choir and priestly robes and listen to the rationale for having them.

G.A. Chan
The Babylonian Captivity of the Church
The Trinity Review #152

BUILDING ANOTHER BABEL

There is an inherent danger when men undertake to build for God. He calls us to build with gold, silver and precious stones. However, it is our natural tendency to build with wood, hay and stubble. The house that we intend to be for God may end up looking more like the tower of Babel.

John Saunders
The House of God

THE BABYLONIAN SYSTEM

The further removed I am from the Babylon system, and by this I definitely mean the existing church system with all its vaunted orthodoxy, the more I am convinced that for the most part all its teachings are inside out, upside down, and backward.

G.R. Hawtin (1909-1994)
Creation, Redemption, and the Restitution of All Things, page 64

RULING OVER THE LESSER RANKS

In such man-made “church” organizations, man must have order and order is kept by creating authoritative “offices” which “rule” over lesser ranks. But such things are a stinking noxious vapor in God's nostrils. Rather, God looks for servants who are willing and those who would be last rather than first.

Ross Purdy
I Will Have One Doctrine and One Discipline
(2006)

