

Spiritual Osmosis
Pastor's Fellowship 2008
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We are all aware of how Christ Jesus came and built the Church. And we can also see that he desired his disciples to go and help that Church multiply.

Mark 16:15

15 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

(KJV)

We also know that at Pentecost that God sent the Holy Spirit upon the Church to enable it to grow and fully form as 3,000 souls were saved in one day.

From that day there have been many men and women, some we can read about in the word and others that we can't, which have labored tremendously to establish the Church of God.

They planted the seed of truth in the hearts of willing listeners and stood by it as truth. Not with jelly spines, but with courage and dignity.

They planned for its maintenance and up keep. They had thought for the future, not just what they were doing in there present day.

I am afraid that the Church of today is stuck in the frame of thinking for today and doesn't worry to much about what tomorrow might bring.

How that we work and plan today, may decide what hope we have for growth tomorrow.

2 Pet 1:15

15 Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance.

Peter along with Paul realized that it was necessary that the word went forth even when they were gone.

But it is my ever-growing fear that the people that have been called of God to be the Gospel light in this spiritually dark world have lost their fire. We have become big business in many cases and we have lost our focus on what really is important, *"That is being the pillar and ground for the truth for the Church of the living God."* (1 Timothy 3:15)

Even though we are seeing the Church grow at a rather rapid rate in our Nation, can we deny the fact that the Church is not the strong and virile force it ought to be in changing the world for God? The New Testament Church was accused of *"Turning the world upside down"* in Acts 17:6.

What are they accusing us of today?

Paul warned in,

Rom 12:2

2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God

KJV

It seems to me that in the last several years that the world has been changing the Church instead of the Church being a agent of change in the world.

In my opinion that is why so many of our churches today look overpowered and undernourished. It troubles me that we have started to sacrifice our distinctiveness so that we can be trendy and fashionable.

You can hear claims all the time about ones that will dilute our message in order to maintain a crowd. Now only God and that Pastor know for sure if that is happening, but Lord forgive us if it is.

When I was given the topic of my conference I quickly realized the broad nature of it. There are so many avenues that we can go down. But as I sought the Lord the more He began to lead me down the path of Assimilation of Church Doctrine.

I hope that you have not come into this conference to get the low down on the newest and best Church growth tactic, or the best way to disciple new converts. (*Show them Bill Neece's Books*)

Because that is not what this is about at all. One of the greatest fears that I have for the Reformation Movement is that because of our cultural climate that we are gradually seeing a decline in our efforts to pass down the “great truths that broke our bonds” from the pulpits of our local churches.

Now we are attempting to voice our message through avenues such as Pastor's Fellowship, Reformation Publishers and The Reformation Witness just to name a few. But I really don't see that there is an ample substitute for hearing the glorious truth of God's Church proclaimed from the pulpit of the local Church. That is where we will see the best results in my humble opinion.

But what has changed in recent years that pulpits that were once filled with conviction for our Doctrinal truths have now started to give into our cultural climate of relativism.

We are now knee deep in a culture that teaches that truth is only what you and I believe or can agree on. But truth does not hinge on my believing it and you believing it, or upon our mutual acceptance of it. But it is truth because it is God's word.

If you was to ask me what I think is a big reason in this decline, I would have to say we may have fallen prey to our own doctrinal standards. Let me explain for a moment.

As America has become the world's melting pot (which is a good thing) we have now began to lose our own heritage. (which is not a good thing)

We teach, preach and sing “*We reach our hands in fellowship to every blood washed one*” and that is great. That is what being the church is all about. Salvation makes you a member and God places His members where He sees fit to place them.

But if we are not careful today we can see a “*Solomon and his wives*” effect take place in the Church.

We all know the story very well, as it is told in 1st Kings 11. That as time passed and more wives were welcomed into Solomon's house, so were their god's. And the end result was 1

Kings 11:6

6 And Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and went not fully after the LORD, as did David his father.

KJV

It is my concern that we may not be doing as good as job as we need to in the area of teaching the doctrines that make us distinctive to those that may come to our fellowship with different view or spiritual backgrounds.

And in some instances, as with Solomon, with the passage of time we just come to terms with what we can all agree on and speak nothing of the things that we disagree on and act as if they are non-essential.

Bro. Gerald Rudd quoted one of our pioneers in his recent Article in Reformation Witness entitled, “*The Reality of Truth*” that really push across my point well. He stated, “*We need to be careful in a world where the principle that is at work at the present time is to secure a maximum of unity with a minimum of religious truth... Do not set out our doctrines that are distinctive. I will lay down my distinctive doctrine if you will just lay yours down, and we will unite on that*”

It was never God's design for His church to have knowledge of truth but have no application of that truth. He wants us to apply the truth of His word to our lives and allow it to be the change agent in the lives of those around us.

We cannot allow popular opinion or false doctrine to seep into our local congregations and allow them to dilute our message.

I am afraid that “*Spiritual Osmosis*” is taking place in the church.

Osmosis is: *A natural process where water of low salt concentration will flow through a membrane to dilute water of high salt concentration until equal concentration on both sides of the membrane is reached.*

Spiritual Osmosis is when ones from different doctrinal views or religious backgrounds are allowed come to our fellowship with no anticipation on our part or theirs that they will adhere to our distinctive doctrines.

And if this process continues then we will see a dilution of our message all in the name of Unity.

Paul told us in 2 Timothy 4 that we needed to be preaching the word of God with patience and doctrine, because there was going to be a time that people wouldn't want to hear it. We would be asked to water it down a bit.

Don Neace wrote in a Editorial from April 2001 edition of Reformation Witness that, "In the political world, candidates are thrilled when they can get their opponent "off message". That means that they have successfully changed the intended message to something less important."

My friends the devil is no different. He loves to get the Church "off message".

So what are we to do to help make sure that our message doesn't get lost in the name of Unity and Brotherly love?

What follows is some Responsibilities of the Church in this uncertain time that we live in.

1.) Responsibility of the Present Day Church:

What the next generation Church will be depends greatly on what we show them and teach them today.

The responsibility of tomorrow rest upon our shoulders today.

We are the ones that have to lay the solid foundation of Doctrinal Truth for the next generation Church to be able to have the proper structure to continue to expand God's Church the way He intended it to be built.

A.) *The foundation of Truth must be properly laid:*

*** There must be a proper teaching of Church Doctrines.*

There is a multitude of people that are in the Church of God that have no idea what they are in.

They don't know what we stand for and why we stand for those things.

But it is not fully there fault. If a child goes all the way through school and never learns to read is it totally that child's fault? **NO!! Somewhere the teachers slipped.**

Now there are some that just are not interested but in many cases the problem is the lack of teaching.

Our Sunday school classes must be filled with Doctrinal teaching, our youth meetings must be supplied with Doctrinal truths, and Our Preaching must ring loud and clear with the Doctrines of God.

I have been criticized for recommending to my congregation not to read certain books and things of that nature.

But it is my job to lay down a solid foundation of truth no matter who is offended. *(Tell about 7th day Adventist teaching on Revelations)*

We have to protect our sheep from the wolves.

*** Consistent display of the Standard in our lives:*

There are things that go on in the Church that we have to be blunt and to the point in not allowing. *Explain*

But for the most part the Church body living a good example in front of others will do the trick.

It can't be a force fed doctrine. We are dealing with sheep here not cattle.

Tell about the lady that said she picked her fights with her kids. Didn't stress over things that was not detrimental.

We need to take that same focus today. Things that are serious situations that are harmful to the person and the Church nip it. But when it is just a difference of opinion or method or cultural differences we just need to be patient.

***Devotion to the Truth or Doctrines and an eager effort to spread them:*

If we don't show willingness and a fire to pass them on then how do we expect them to have a desire to learn them and keep them?

***Show Respect to Leadership:*

I am afraid that the Church of tomorrow will be one that is nearly impossible to lead, because we are not raising our children to be led, but to do what it takes to get what we want.

With this type of mentality it is sure to fail.

***Teach that God rules not majority:*

The problems that we see in the other denominations around us are that they have taken the attitude that the majority of the Church rules even when it is against Gods laws.

We are moving to be more similar to a political party than we are the body of Christ.

Majority should never reign over Gods desires, but it is going to take a group of people with plenty of backbone to stop this trend.

2.) What may we expect from those that are disciples:

If we do what all we can in our power to equip those that enter into our fellowship, I believe that it is only reasonable for us to expect results of the Church.

*** Receive and pass on these great truths:*

2 Tim 1:5

5 When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.

(KJV)

The truths of God were pass on to me by my mother, father and grandmother. And now I am passing them on to others.

Tell about Foot washing with Dwain in Clarksville.

*** Stand for these truths unflinchingly:*

If we stand for the Church and fight and protect the Church and not give in to the world but fight the world, the Church of tomorrow will follow our footsteps.

But if we show them compromise and a dropping of the Standard that is exactly what they will do.

*** They will insure the Church against apostasy:*

The Church is headed for a definite decline if the Church of tomorrow isn't prepared to carry the torch of Holiness in the next generation.

John Wesley *"I am not afraid that the people called Methodist should ever cease to exist in Europe or America, but I am afraid lest they should exist as a dead sect having a form of godliness without the power. If ever Methodism is over thrown, it will be at the hands of her scholars who neither believe her doctrines nor practice her policies. This is the unreasonable men from whom it must purge itself or fall from its own weight."*

We as the Church of God must protect our selves from people that want to change us and make us something new and improved.

You can't improve on anything that God has already made perfect.

But for some reason everybody thinks that they have to change things. Every generation thinks that they need to improve what the others have done before them.

We need to quite trying to improve the message of the Church and start upholding the ones that God set for us.

Now there is nothing wrong with finding new ways to proclaim this truth or to broadcast it to the world around us, but we need to always remember that ***Truth is unchanging.***

EX. Mathematics, straight line is shortest difference, Horse is a Horse etc.

They will be things that will change with culture, time and location. But the truth is the truth and should never be tampered with.

Rev 22:18-19

18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:

19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

(KJV)

The demand for us is to keep the faith and up hold the standards and truths.

We need to form youth groups that teach loyalty, respect, sincerity towards God and his work, holy living, spiritual leadership and faithfulness to his service.

We need to preach a changeless Christ to an ever-changing world.

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