

The Church

by Dr. Jack Hyles

In a time of error and confusion, discover the Biblical and historical truth about the Church.

One of the saddest things about our generation is that Baptists are quitting being Baptists and becoming inter-denominational. I believe we should treasure our Baptist heritage. Few preachers today mention anything about the church. It is almost unheard of. They may preach on being faithful to church and attending church, but not on the doctrines of the church. There are some things about the church that I believe should be taught in every Baptist church in America.

I am a Baptist. I have no animosity towards anybody else. They are saved people in many different groups. I have dear friends who are fine Christian people, yet are not members of Baptist churches. But, I do thank God that I am a Baptist, and I love my Baptist heritage.

There are some things going on in Baptist circles that most people do not understand. There are things going on because God is purging in order for the New Testament churches to be perpetuated. That happens in every generation. Every generation has to be willing to stand alone.

What this nation needs is more soul-winning New Testament churches in every neighborhood. We need men of God to start New Testament churches all across this nation. The Devil does not want New Testament churches. That is why he attacks them so viciously. May God in Heaven bring us back to the old-fashioned doctrine of the true church.

Dr. Jack Hyles addresses controversial and surprising issues as he attempts to help fundamentalists return to the Biblical and historical truths about the church.

Why have we allowed ourselves to be influenced by those who do not believe in the local New Testament church?

How have fundamental churches been unknowingly influenced by the Catholic church?

How does Satan infiltrate a church and take away its soul winning, separation and independence?

Is education a responsibility of the church or of the state?

What causes a church to become charismatic?

Why have we adopted so many unscriptural beliefs and practices about the church?

Why do denominations lead churches into the sin of idolatry?

Dr. Jack Hyles is the pastor of the First Baptist Church of Hammond, Indiana, which is the home of America's largest Sunday School. Every year this great church baptizes over 8,000 converts. He is the founder of Hyles-Anderson College, an institution dedicated to training local church pastors and workers. His annual Pastors' School attracts several thousand preachers and Christian workers from all across the nation. Dr. Hyles has authored over forty books and is in great demand as a conference speaker.

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Chapter One

Have Mercy On Me

A young man had committed a misdemeanor and was appearing before a judge for the first time. He was fidgety and nervous. The judge, in an effort to settle him down, said, "Son, don't be nervous. I'll see to it that you get justice." The young man nervously replied, "Yes, sir, Mr. Judge. That's what I'm afraid of, please could you throw in a little mercy on the side."

This author pleads with the reader to please throw a little mercy in on the side as you read this book. Why do I plead for your mercy? Because this book is different. This, like my books on prayer, the Holy Spirit and others, come from a series of Bible studies that I have taught to the membership of the First Baptist Church of Hammond, Indiana, on Wednesday nights. My custom has been to take the outlines from which I taught and spend many hours dictating them for transcription and publication. Such is not the case in this book. I simply did not have the time, for many reasons. There were more demands on my time than ever. Because of that, I have simply had the Bible studies on Wednesday night transcribed, edited, proofread and prepared for publication. As you read, please consider yourself sitting in the auditorium of our church, listening to a Bible study. I think you will find it easier to forgive me for the repetition of statements and even illustrations.

I do not claim to be an author; I simply want to leave all that I can for the following generation. At this printing, I am 44 years of age, which means that I'm old enough for Social Security. I have been preaching for over 47 years and pastoring for 45 of those years. During these years I have pastored hundreds for thousands of people, preached over 52,000 sermons and had a personal acquaintance with thousands of preachers.

Please be lenient with me as you read. Have mercy on me by avoiding the position of critique, and as you give me justice, throw a little mercy in on the side.

Chapter Two

What Is a Church?

Wherefore I also, after hearing of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all. - Ephesians 1:15-22

One of the saddest things about our generation is that Baptists are quitting being Baptists. They are becoming too inter-denominational. I believe we should treasure our Baptist heritage. Few preachers today mention anything about the church. It is almost unheard of. They may preach on being faithful to church and attending church, but not on the doctrines of the church. I am going to cover some things that I believe should be taught in every Baptist church in America.

I am a Baptist. I have no animosity towards anybody else. They are saved people in many different groups. I have dear friends who are fine Christian people, yet are not members of Baptist churches. But, I do thank God that I am a Baptist, and I love my Baptist heritage.

The word church comes from two words. One word is ek which means out, and the other word is kaleo which means to call. The word is ekklousea and it means a called-out group. This is the word for church in the New Testament. It is a called-out group. When I refer to the church, I am referring to a called-out group. In the Bible it is often called an assembly, but it is not just an assembly. It is a called-out assembly. Let me explain further.

- 1. In order to be a church, the people called-out must have been a part of another group.**
- 2. They must have been called out of that group.**
- 3. They must have formed another group.**

The church is a called-out assembly because they were called out from the world to assemble. So, they must have been in the world, they must have been called out from the world, and they must have formed a new group in order for them to be a called-out assembly.

This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us. Acts 7:38

Israel was called a church in the wilderness, but Israel was not a church when she was in Egypt because she was not yet a called-out assembly. When she was in Canaan she was not yet a church because she was not a called-out assembly. God called them out from Egypt, and they assembled in the wilderness. They were then a called-out assembly. They were called out of Egypt to assemble and form another group in the wilderness. So, God calls Israel a church in the wilderness.

Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was confused. Acts 19:32a

Paul was in jeopardy because of the uproar of the silversmiths in Ephesus. People were getting saved and the silversmiths, who made little goddesses of Diana, were having their business hurt. They were upset with Paul. That word assembly is the word ekklesia. That mob of people assembled from Ephesus which was trying to do Paul harm was a part of another group. They were called together out of that group to form another group. The purpose of forming that group was to do harm to Paul. So, in the Bible there were many different churches. I do not mean religious organizations, but groups of people who were called out to assemble.

But if ye inquire any thing concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful assembly. Acts 19:39

Once again the word assembly or ekklesia is used. The governing body of Israel was called an assembly. It was an ekklesia, or a church. They were not a New Testament church, but anytime there was a group called out from another group to assemble, that assembly was called an ekklesia. In the United States, our Senate and our Congress are called out from us to assemble in Washington, DC. That is what was called an ekklesia or an assembly. In fact, in many states the State Legislature is called the State Assembly. This is exactly what it was in those days.

The word synagogue comes from a word which means a group of people meeting, but to be an *ekklesia* it had to be people of the same kind. For example, if a group of lawyers come out from the rest of society, meet in some city, and have an assembly or convention, that is an *ekklesia*. If there is a medical convention, it is an *ekklesia*. There must be a common bond in order for it to be called an *ekklesia*. It would be called a *synagogue* if there was no common bond.

In the New Testament church our common bond is that we have received Jesus as the living Son of God. It was upon this that the church was built. "Upon this rock I will build my church." What rock? Not Peter, but on the profession that Peter made when he said, "Thou art the Son of *the Living God*." We have a common bond. The world knew nothing about that bond. We have a common Book that we love. We have a common Savior Whom we love. We have a common Holy Spirit Who lives in our bodies. A group of people which assembles because they have a common bond qualifies them to be called an *ekklesia* or a church.

*Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write ... Revelation 2:1
And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write ... Verse 8
And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write ... Verse 12
And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write ... Verse 18
And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write ... Revelation 3:1
And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write ... Verse 7
And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write ... Verse 14*

All these were churches. They were assembled, they had a common bond and a common purpose, but it was not the same purpose that the church of Philadelphia had. The Catholic church across the street from our church in Hammond is a church. It is not a New Testament church, but it is a church because it is a called-out assembly. That means that the church at Ephesus, Sardis, Pergamos, Philadelphia, Thyatira, and even the wicked Laodicea were all churches. So, liberal churches are churches. They are not New Testament churches, but they are churches.

Jesus started an *ekklesia* of His own. He did not start **the** *ekklesia*. The word *ekklesia* was used before Jesus started His *ekklesia*. There was an *ekklesia* in the wilderness back in the Old Testament days. Jesus started His own *ekklesia* based on the bond of accepting Christ as Saviour and as the Son of God. There is no bond like the bond which is in a true New Testament church, because He is that bond.

When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea of Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Matthew 16:13-18

Jesus was building one of the following when He started the church.

- 1. a church consisting of all believers.**
- 2. a denomination**
- 3. a congregation**

All three cannot be true, and no two can be true. Either Jesus started a local assembly, a denomination, or the church is composed of all believers (an invisible church). Jesus said, *“upon this rock I will build my church.”* He did not say, *“I will build my churches.”* We must then decide which one is right.

Some people say that the church is composed of all believers. Some people say the church is a denomination. Some people say that the church is a congregation of people. Which is right? Let's reason.

1. It could not be all believers. If it is all believers, what happened from Adam to Christ? If the church was started on Pentecost, which it was not (that will be covered in a later chapter), then what happened to all of the Old Testament people? Were they not saved? If, when a person gets saved, he is baptized into the church, (an invisible body of all the same people), then Moses and Abraham were unsaved. Therefore, it could not be all believers.

2. The church that Jesus started in Matthew 16:8 was not started then. He said he was going to start it. It was the same church which was mentioned in Matthew 18:17

And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Matthew 18:17

The word church used here is the same word ekklesia which is mentioned in Matthew 16:18. How can you tell something to an invisible church? You cannot tell it to every Christian if every Christian forms the church. When He said to tell it to the church, He was referring to a group of people who have been called out of the world. When you get saved, you are called out of the world, but God has an institution he wants you to join, so you can reassemble. It must be a local body of believers. If it is the local body of believers, then it is not invisible.

The average Baptist does not believe or know this. We do not teach it any more. Jesus started only one church. It cannot be visible and invisible. So, if it is the visible church, there can be no invisible church. I take issue with Mr. Scofield when he refers to the visible and invisible churches. The true church is a group of born-again baptized believers, who have a common bond of having Christ in their lives, having been born again, made new creatures in Christ Jesus, and trying to propagate that wonderful message, so that others can receive the message of grace. That is the true church. This needs to be emphasized. We accepted inter-denominational teaching, and, as a result, have damaged the true church.

When the invisible church-goers want to raise money, they always go to a visible church to raise the money. Isn't that interesting? They do not send their money-raisers out to invisible churches, because invisible churches give invisible money. There is a mentality that is sweeping this nation that if you *“Grow in grace”* you do not need to have a local church. People have the idea that you can join the Gideons, Youth for Christ,

Child Evangelism, or some other group instead of being a part of a local New Testament church. Any ministry can do better in a true church than it can outside of it. The greatest child evangelism program is in the local church. The greatest youth for Christ program is in the local church. More Jewish people are reached by the local church than in all of the Jewish ministries that are operated outside of the church.

But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, Saying I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. Hebrews 2:9-12

Jesus said that He was going to preach and sing in the church. The church could not have started on Pentecost. It had to have been started in the personal ministry of Christ because the Bible says that He sang and preached in it. It is not talking about His invisible presence in the church. It is talking about the fact that Jesus went to church during His earthly ministry. He would not start a church, and then not show up when it met.

Often, a businessman will get saved in a church like First Baptist. He loves it. He teaches a Sunday school class. He gets a bus route. Then these “super church” believers come in and “promote” him out of the local church. Because he is a businessman, he thinks he has risen above the local church. You will never rise above the local church. Men across this country by the thousands seldom go to their own church, because they have been given some job in a spiritual service outside the true church which is the local church. They eventually die on the spiritual vine.

What America needs is not more telecasts. We need more local churches. I do not like the phrase, “Electronic Church.” There is no such thing as an “Electronic Church.” There will never be anything that can substitute for a place where people come and have the Word of God taught to them by a pastor, and a place where they can build their lives. The purpose of Hyles-Anderson College is to train men to go out and work in churches.

But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect. Hebrews 12:22,23

The word church is the word ekklesia. This passage is talking about the rapture. The church is a called-out group. At the rapture, all believers will be called out from this earth, meet in the air, and assemble in the sky. Then, and only then, will we be a called-out assembly. This is what this passage is talking about.

There is a church being built right now, but it is not yet a church because it has not yet been called out and assembled. At this moment there is only one church and that is the local body. All believers are not a church because all believers have not yet been assembled. At the trumpet, the first resurrection, all believers will be assembled, and will become a called-out assembly, or a church. That is not the same as the New Testament church. It is the church of the first born which will be assembled in the sky.

What about the Scriptures that say the church is His body? That is a term of ownership. The local church belongs to Him. He is the head of it in the sense that He is the boss of it. Hyles-Anderson College is owned by the First Baptist Church. The local New Testament church is owned by Jesus. It is His possessive body.

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also

called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. Romans 8:28-30

Jesus wills that every person whose name is written in Heaven be part of a local church. Romans 8:28 is not for those who do not belong to a true church. You cannot be right with God and not belong to a true church. A family, who I love very much wrote me a letter one day, that said, "Brother Hyles, we have had a wonderful time lately. For months now, we have not gone to church anywhere. We have just stayed at home and learned to know God better." No, they did not. Nobody learns to know God better outside the institution Jesus started than they can inside of it. You cannot be right with God and wrong with the *ekklesia*. You cannot be right with God and not belong to the *ekklesia*.

Our Baptist brethren in history died for this truth, yet many Baptists today do not even believe it. Never again talk about the invisible church, or the universal church. The word Catholic means universal church. Let the Catholics have that doctrine. There is no such thing according to the Bible. Jesus started one church. That church is the church in which you can hear a message. It is a church where Jesus preached and where Jesus sang. It is a church where people meet. It is a church that has membership and has people baptized. It is a church that has pastors and deacons. It is a local assembly of believers.

People write me letters saying, "Brother Hyles, we're moving to a certain town in a certain state, but we can't find a church there. What should we do?" I write back two words. "**Don't move!**" If you cannot find a church, God does not want you there. God wants every Christian in an *ekklesia*.

What this nation needs is more soul-winning New Testament churches in every neighborhood. We need men of God to start *ekklesias* all across this nation. That is why the Devil has attacked First Baptist Church so viciously. The Devil does not want *ekklesias*. May God in Heaven bring us back to the old-fashioned doctrine of the true church and not the dreamed up invisible church.

Chapter Three

Church Perpetuity

Since Jesus started the New Testament church, there have always been New Testament churches. I am not talking about denominational succession. I do not believe in denominational succession. By succession I mean that one denomination started another denomination, and that one started another one, and that continued until you get to the church I pastor today.

I cannot prove local church succession. It may be that every church was started by a church, that was started by a church, that was started by a church, that was started by a church, that was started by a church, that was started by Jesus. I do not know, but that is not the issue. The issue is that there has never been a time, since Jesus established the church in Matthew chapter ten, that there was not a church that was descended from that first local church started by the Lord.

In a sense Baptists have succeeded each other, but that does not include all Baptists. Baptists have existed ever since the New Testament, but that does not mean that all Baptists are descended from those in the New Testament. I know Baptist preachers who will take transfers from any Baptist church, yet there are hundreds of Baptist churches that are completely liberal. Just because they are Baptist does not mean that they are part of a New Testament church. I do not care about the denominational tag.

We have the idea of the perpetuity of a denomination, which is not true. There are some Baptist churches that are not Baptist at all. It is not the succession of a denomination that has caused the perpetuity of the church. It is the splitting of the denomination that has caused the perpetuity of the church. The trail of blood from the time Jesus started the church until now has not been perpetuated by denomination, but by people splitting those denominations to start new movements. So, it is not the major denomination that has perpetuated New Testament churches. It is the split off of that denomination which has done so.

There are four steps in every Baptist movement. I am referring to the Southwide Baptist Fellowship, the General Association of Regular Baptists, the Conservative Baptist Association, the Baptist Bible Fellowship, the Southern Baptist Convention, etc., When one of these group starts, the four steps in the decay of a Baptist movement begins.

Step 1. It starts with a man. Every Baptist movement is started from a man. The Baptist Bible Fellowship started with J. Frank Norris. The Southwide Baptist Fellowship was the baby of Dr. Lee Roberson. The General Assembly of Regular Baptists was the baby of Dr. Bob Ketchum. The Conservative Baptist Association was the baby of Dr. Myron Cedarholm. That is the first step in every great movement.

Step 2. It becomes a movement. That is the best day of a group. It is moving. It is virile. It is active. It is starting and building churches. It is getting the job done.

Step 3. It become a machine.

Step 4. It becomes a monument.

Let me show you where some of these groups are on this progression.

The American Baptist Convention is a monument.

The Southern Baptist Convention is a machine. It was a man. Then, for many years it was a movement. Now, it is a machine. The denomination runs the churches. Someday it will be a monument.

The Baptist Bible Fellowship is halfway between movement and machine. It is just entering into the machine stage from being a movement.

If I started a denomination, it would go the same route. Why? Because a movement is not of God. Movements are not always bad, but Jesus never started a denomination or a movement. No denominations ever starts off intending to be a denomination. A denomination is a result of decadence that was never intended. It was intended to be a fellowship of churches, but it evolves. Denominationalism is not of God. It is the decay of a movement. That is why God is not concerned about denominations. God is concerned about local churches.

A few years ago I was preaching in Erie, Pennsylvania. They had a breakfast for pastors, and about forty-five pastors came. Nobody was trying to blacklist anybody. Nobody was trying to politic with anybody. Everybody was on an equal level. It was not a denomination. It was just a group of churches getting together in fellowship. One day, somebody may suggest that they elect officers. Then somebody else may suggest that they have a charter. Somebody else will suggest that they adopt a statement of faith. Then, somebody will try to pass some resolutions. It keeps on going and going until finally it has become a denomination. It starts off as a group of preachers getting together to fellowship with each other, and ends up with somebody wanting some authority. God is not for that.

Let me give you some facts about Baptist churches.

1. Baptist churches existed before the Reformation. We were not always called Baptists. We did not name ourselves. Our enemies named us. We were originally called *Anabaptists* which means rebaptizers. One of the three great doctrines which causes us to be persecuted is that we do not believe in infant baptism. When these baptizers got people saved they baptized their converts again, even though they had been baptized as babies, so their enemies called them re-baptizers.

When I first went to Hammond, a large number of unsaved people in the church got saved. We baptized them even though most of them had already been baptized, so somebody started calling me the **double-dip Baptist preacher**. That is why the Baptists were called Anabaptists, or rebaptizers.

There were Baptist churches before the Reformation. The Reformation was the time when Martin Luther pulled out of the Catholic church and decided that *the just shall live by faith*. At that time the Protestant movement was started. I am not a Protestant. Protestants are those who came out of Catholicism. Baptists did not come out of Catholicism. When Martin Luther decided the just shall live by faith and started the Reformation, Baptists people were in hiding.

2. At the Reformation the Baptists had hope and decided that it was safe to come out of hiding. Martin Luther began preaching salvation like they had always been preaching it. They were in for a surprise. Even though the Catholics and Protestants were fighting each other, they were together on one issue, and only one issue. They hated the Baptists. The Baptists though that Martin Luther's Reformation would bring them out of hiding, but it did not, because Martin Luther persecuted Baptists just like the Catholics persecuted Baptists. John Calvin persecuted Baptists just like the Catholics persecuted Baptists. I believe that Martin Luther was a great man like Henry Ford was a great man, but he was not a great Christian, or a great preacher. He was a great leader. Martin Luther would have put preachers like me in jail.

3. The Catholics and the Protestants united to exterminate the Baptists.

4. Henry the VIII banished Baptists and gave them twelve days to leave or die.

5. Baptists were slaughtered in the Netherlands just for being Baptists.

6. Baptists were banned in Germany.

7. Much of the blood shed by Bloody Mary came from Baptists veins.

8. Queen Elizabeth gave Baptists twelve days to leave the country.

9. Switzerland killed Baptists by drowning and burning them at the stake.

In our country we have the idea that the Pilgrims came to the new land looking for religious freedom. They came looking for it, but they also came denying it. They came looking for their religious freedom while at the same time choking Baptists' religious freedom.

- In 1669 William Wickendon preached the first Baptist sermon in New York state. He was jailed for 3 months.

- In North Carolina they passed a law prohibiting the building of Baptist church buildings.

- In 1676 the first Baptist church building was built in Boston, Massachusetts. It was confiscated, and the doors were nailed shut.

- In the colonies, Baptists were jailed and whipped.

So, why were Baptists hated? They were hated for three doctrines in which they believed:

1. Their doctrine opposed infant baptism.

2. They opposed the doctrine of baptismal regeneration.

3. They believed in the separation of church and state.

When the Declaration of Independence was drawn up, England declared that it was an Anabaptist (Baptist) declaration. It was considered to be a doctrine of heresy when Baptists said that they were for the separation of church and state.

How hath this perpetuity of the Baptist church been made possible? Not by denominations, but by churches splitting from the denominations. So, it is not a denominational perpetuity. It is a local church perpetuity. Most Baptist denominations are not Baptist at all. They deteriorated from being Baptist churches. In my opinion, the American Baptist Convention does not have churches that are true New Testament churches. Church history courses taught in most of our colleges teach the Baptist succession. Church history is the history of local congregations. Even the history of the Baptist denomination is not true church history. In fact, the history of the Baptist denomination is the history of decay. It is not the Baptist denomination that has kept the perpetuity of the churches. It is the individual local churches that have split off others which have decayed, that has caused the perpetuity of the church.

From the American Baptist Convention came the Southern Baptist Convention. From those two major denominations have come several other movements. For example, Dr. Myron Cedarholm and Dr. Lee Roberson did not come from the same denomination. Dr. Myron Cedarholm was at one time in the American Baptist Convention. His father was a well known American Baptist preacher, but when the American Baptists became too liberal, the Conservative Baptists split off from them.

There is a group of *fundamentalists* today who split off from the Conservative Baptist Convention. In the early 1960's the Conservative Baptist Association deteriorated and split. Dr. Myron Cedarholm, Archer Weniger and a crowd of older men, most of whom are now in Heaven, formed the Conservative Baptist Fellowship, which came from their Conservative Baptist Association, which came from the American Baptist Convention. They made a major mistake. They pulled out doctrinally, but they did not pull out in relationship to church government. They kept the old committee idea of running the church.

From the American Baptist Convention came another group called the General Association of American

Baptists. Robert Ketchum was the leader of that group. They did the same thing. They pulled out doctrinally, but they did not pull out as far as church organization was concerned, and that has destroyed them.

The Baptist Bible Fellowship split from the Southern Baptist Convention. The World Baptist Fellowship split from the Baptist Bible Fellowship, and then recently split into something else. People sometimes wonder why there are so many Baptists. That is why the church has been kept alive. It is not the main line denomination that has perpetuated the church. It is the split that has perpetuated the church.

Revelation chapters two and three deal with seven letters written by the Holy Spirit, dictated to John, and sent to seven different churches in Asia Minor. In the Scofield Bible above verse eight of chapter two it reads; **The message to Smyrna. Period of the great persecutions, to A.D. 316.** Above verse twelve it reads; **The message to Pergamos. The church under imperial favour, settled in the world, A.D. 316 to the end.** Mr. Scofield teaches that these seven churches represent seven periods of church history. Mr. Scofield is wrong. There is not one single place in the Bible that gives any inclination of this. These were seven churches which were located in Asia Minor. I believe God gave us these churches in this order because these churches are in different places on the line of decay. God used these seven churches, to show us the decay of every movement.

Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of this place, except thou repent. But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate. Revelation 2:4-6

The word Nicolaitanes comes from two words Greek words - Nicao, which means to conquer, and Laitans which is the word laity. It means to conquer the laity. It is denominationalism. It is what happens when somebody outside of the local church starts to run the local church. It is nobody's business what a church does. When churches want to get together in fellowship, that is fine, but when they get together to rule each other, that is not fine. But, it is inevitable that when they get together to fellowship, they ultimately will organize and become a denomination, and begin to control each other.

People say that Independent Baptists have no weights and balances, and no way to check on their ministers. That is exactly right. Jesus established the church and the church is to take care of its own business.

This church at Ephesus hated the doctrines of the Nicolaitanes. It was an independent church. It hated denominational control. But, even though it was independent, it left its first love and quit doing its first works. Here we have an independent Baptist church that is not soul winning anymore. That is the first step to decay. In the majority of independent Baptist churches in America, soul winning is unpopular.

Many years ago I preached at Southern Baptist Convention meetings. I have preached for many years at the Southwide Baptist Fellowship and Baptist Bible Fellowship meetings. It is harder now to preach at the Independent Baptist Conventions than it was thirty-five years ago at the Southern Baptist Conventions. There is as much politics going on in some of these groups as there is in the American Baptist Conventions. They are independent, but they are on their way down because they have quit their first love of soul winning.

Give me a church that keeps on soul winning and I will give you a church that will stay fairly straight on everything else. As long as you do what you are supposed to do, you will believe what you are supposed to believe. So, in the church at Ephesus we see the condition of independent Baptists today.

And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive; Fear none of those things which thou shall suffer: behold, the Devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. Revelation 2:8, 10

The church at Smyrna shows us the second step of deterioration. The church quits soul winning, and

trials start to come. Satan tries to get us wrapped up in those trials and quit soul winning. Independent Baptists have become so enchanted with their trials and fighting their battles that the main job is not being done. We have become issue-oriented. Several years ago, one of the biggest and best soul-winning churches in America got on a “kick” concerning freedom for churches. I am for that, but you do not need to have freedom for churches to win souls if you are not winning souls. There is no reason for fighting something to exist that does not exist anyway. This church got off of soul winning and is only a shadow of the church it once was.

We must not get so wrapped up in battles that we become issue-oriented. We must not enjoy these trials, because if we enjoy them, we will not want them to end. We ought to enjoy most the obeying of the Great Commission.

And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; ...I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, and even where Satan's seat is. Revelation 2:12a, 13a

That word Satan in the Greek is the word meaning throne. Where is Satan's throne? He is the god of this world, so it is in the world. The church at Pergamos was dwelling in the world. When you quit soul winning and get wrapped up in other things, before you know it, you will lose your standards and convictions.

John 15 says that God will purge those who bear fruit that they may bring forth more fruit. Soul winners will become separated. Now, we have in this nation the church at Pergamos.

Notice something else about the church at Pergamos in Revelation 2:15. *So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate.* They embraced the doctrine of conquering the laity from without, or denominationalism. Churches that quit soul winning get bound in denominationalism. Churches that get issue-oriented become worldly. If you are not a soul winner, you will have to get a denomination to help you grow and prop you up. This is how denominationalism gets such a strangle-hold on churches.

Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel...
Revelation 2:20a

A bad woman in the Bible is a symbol of false religion. A good woman is a symbol of the true bride of Christ. Jezebel represented ecumenicalism, or a union of bad churches. The church at Thyatira represents the stage of a movement when it turns to ecumenicalism. That is the next step in the progression.

I saw a denomination deteriorate. The Southern Baptist Convention deteriorated from being an evangelistic and separated group to being almost totally ecumenical. Just because they elect a man to moderate who is a *fundamentalist* does not mean that they are *fundamental*. Go to Southern Seminary and see how *fundamental* they are. Go to Baylor University and see how *fundamental* they are. Southern Baptist churches are now ordaining women preachers. Many are just like the church at Thyatira.

The church at Ephesus quit soul winning. Smyrna became issue-oriented because of suffering. Pergamos became worldly. Thyatira became a false church through ecumenicalism.

Next was Sardis which had a reputation of being alive but was actually dead. We see that in the Charismatic movement in this country. They seem to have life, but spiritually their people are dead.

The next church was at Philadelphia. Why was that church put between the fifth and the seventh churches? Because the church at Philadelphia was the good New Testament church. It was a small church. Why? Because it represented the church that split off from the church that was one step from becoming the Laodicean church. Before Laodicea comes is the time to get out. That is why God did not put the church at Laodicea as the sixth church. God placed the church at Philadelphia between numbers five and six to show us that it was getting out time. Why getting-out time? Because my family ought to go to a good church. But, it is

more than that. It is so we can have the perpetuity of New Testament churches.

If New Testament churches continue to exist on the face of the earth, they will exist because something chips off as denominations deteriorate. That is what has and will continue to happen.

If you do not take the first step down, you will never get to the bottom step. Soul winning is the best preventive for decay you can have because soul winning guarantees that you will remain separated.

There are some things going on in Baptist circles, that most people do not understand. There are things going on because God is purging in order for the New Testament churches to be perpetuated. That happens in every generation. Every generation has to define itself, and every generation of Baptists has to be willing to stand alone.

The life of true churches is wrapped up in this willingness to split when decay comes. Life is that way. As the human body begins to decay, new babies are born, who come from the bodies of the adults. When the adults decay and die, there is new life perpetuated on the earth. If no new life comes from the old life, society will die. If no new life comes from the old denomination, it will die.

Every movement that is perpetuated has to give life before that which is decaying has completely decayed. Because of that, we have Independent Baptists.

Chapter Four

Where We Are in Fundamentalism

The Catholic church had what we call a Reformation. The Reformation was when the Protestants (as we call them now) pulled out of Catholicism. The Reformation was not a spiritual revival. We have the mistaken idea that when Martin Luther pulled out of Catholicism there followed a great spiritual awakening and revival. Nothing could be further from the truth. In that day the church was associated with the state. Luther and Calvin were both trying to start another state church. Martin Luther did not believe in the separation of church and state. Neither did John Calvin.

Consider some facts about the Reformation.

1. The Reformation was not a spiritual revival.

2. It was not a return to the New Testament church. Basically, it was a hatred for Catholicism. It was not started by a desire to return to something, but by a desire to leave Catholicism. In that day there were other groups besides the reformers. For example, Zwingli's position was not the same as Calvin's, and Calvin's was not the same as Luther's. In fact, for part of their lives they were bitter enemies and never became close friends. They did have a common hatred for the Catholic church and wanted to start another state church.

3. There was a third group of people in those days called the Anabaptists, which means rebaptizers. The Justinian Code from which we get most of the framework of our laws had a death penalty for rebaptizing people. That was the law of the state because the state and the church were one. The Anabaptists were hated by everybody. Zwingli hated them. So did Martin Luther and John Calvin. They agreed even with the Catholics in their hatred for the Anabaptists. Luther, Calvin and Zwingli all either consented to, or encouraged the death and martyrdom of Anabaptists.

There were three groups of Anabaptists. I will not go into much detail except to list and describe them briefly.

1. One group of Anabaptists believed in building a local church according to the Word of God. The Anabaptists never believed in an invisible, universal church. They always believed in the local church. In fact, that is the one major thing that separated them, because Luther believed in the invisible church as did Calvin, Zwingli and the Catholics. This group was like our Baptists are today. They believed the Word of God was the final authority, and built their churches accordingly.

2. The second group was called the Pietists. They got their "word" from within, in a message from Heaven, or "a word of knowledge," if you please.

3. The third group of Anabaptists were so militant that they wanted to take over the government and force everybody to be Anabaptists.

In every generation we have the same basic alignment of Christian people. I want to show you the alignment of Christian people in our day. Why do *fundamentalists* not get along? Why do we not agree on so many things? There are different kinds of *fundamentalists*. The word fundamental means a group that returns to the original purpose, practice and doctrine of an institution. I am going to take fundamentalism as we know it in America and show you why it is divided.

There are three basic *fundamental* groups in America. There is an American Baptist *fundamentalism* which came from the American Baptist Convention. There is a Protestant *fundamentalism* which came from the

Protestant churches or denominations. It could also be called Reformation *fundamentalism*. Then, there is a Southern Baptist fundamentalism of churches which came from the Southern Baptist Convention. These are the three groups that form the body of what we call *fundamentalism* today.

These have basic disagreements which have caused an invisible fence to come between them. That invisible fence is becoming more visible all the time. Let me show you what I mean.

I. American Baptist *Fundamentalists*

American Baptist *fundamentalism* comes from the old American Baptist denomination which was the original Baptist denomination in America. It was originally called the Northern Baptist Convention. There are two basic groups of people in American Baptist *fundamentalism*. First, there is the General Association of Regular Baptists, or GARB. They split off of the American Baptist Convention and formed a group. Then, the Conservative Baptist Association split off of the American Baptist Convention and formed another group. Dr. Bob Ketchum was probably the most famous man in the GARB. Dr. Myron Cedarholm was probably the best known man in the Conservative Baptist Association. Both of these groups are splits from the Northern Baptist, or American Baptist Convention. Let me tell you more about these groups.

1. They were first basically a northern movement. You will seldom find a GARB church in the south, and you will seldom find a Conservative Baptist church in the south. Basically, these are northern groups.

2. They pulled out mainly over doctrines. They did not leave many of the practices of the American Baptist Convention. They did not change the church government of the American Baptist Convention.

3. They are also more formal than the Southern Baptist fundamentalists, or those who came from the Southern Baptist Convention.

4. They are more highly organized than the other fundamentalist groups.

II. Protestant Fundamentalism

Protestant *fundamentalism* is probably the most impressive of all *fundamentalism*. These are the inter-denominational *fundamentalists*. They are Bible churches, or IFCA (*Independent Fundamental Churches of America*). They are Bible churches or have names like **Church of the Open Door, Central Church, Fellowship Church** or something similar to that. These are not bad people. They are good Christian people. They believe the Bible, but they came from the Protestant group, so they are Protestant *fundamentalists*. That is why they usually believe in the invisible church. That is also why they are not called Baptists. Let me tell you more about these Protestant *fundamentalists*.

1. They look like Protestants, in the same way that Protestants look like Catholics. If you go to a Lutheran church next Sunday, you will have a hard time discerning whether it is Catholic or Lutheran. They are Protestant. If you go to the Episcopalian church, you will have a hard time discerning whether it is Catholic or Episcopalian. I am not being critical. I am being factual. Lutheran preachers wear robes because they came out of Catholicism, but did not change everything. Why does a Presbyterian sprinkle babies? When they came out of Catholicism, that was not an issue. So they still in some ways look like the mother.

2. They came from Reformation people.

3. From them we get the doctrine of the invisible church.

4. Basically, they are the result of the union revivals that were so popular many years ago in America. Many churches would go together for a revival campaign. From these revivals came people who were genuinely born again, but did not know anything about Baptist churches, Baptist policy, Baptist programs, or Baptist doctrine. These people started Bible churches, or inter-denominational churches. They are good fundamental people. They include men like H.A. Ironside, R.A. Torrey, Dwight L. Moody, and Bob Jones. D.L. Moody was not a Baptist. He was a Congregationalist. Although he was a great preacher, he never belonged to the New Testament church.

H.A. Ironside did not pastor a New Testament Baptist church. He pastored a church that came from Protestantism. These men deserve our admiration. They did not know anything else. They wanted something that was not Presbyterian, Reformed, Methodist, Episcopalian, or Lutheran. They wanted something that believed the Bible, so they came from their Protestant denominations and started inter-denominationalism. They had a second Reformation.

5. This was largely a northern movement. They are a little more in the south than the GARB or the Conservative Baptists, but basically it was a northern movement.

6. It was also more formal. Individuals who came out of the Presbyterian church to start independent churches would obviously be more formal than those who came out of Baptist churches to start other Baptist churches.

7. These are good people, but they did not build New Testament churches. New Testament churches must have pastors and deacons. They must believe in New Testament doctrine. Billy Sunday did not belong to the New Testament church because he belonged to a church that came from Protestantism. Billy Sunday was a Protestant. The same fundamental people who supported Billy Sunday's meetings went back to their formal services on Sunday mornings. New Testament churches did not come from Catholicism. They came from Jesus when He started the New Testament church Himself.

I am not criticizing these people, but they did not build New Testament churches. They promoted the invisible church doctrine in addition to the local church doctrine. The only group of people in the history of Christianity that has promoted the local church doctrine has been Baptists.

III. Southern Baptist Fundamentalism

These are the groups that came out of the Southern Baptist Convention. There are some great leaders at Southern Baptist *fundamentalism*. I am talking about men like J. Frank Norris, who started what is now the Baptist Bible Fellowship; Dr. Lee Roberson, who was basically responsible for the Southwide Baptist Fellowship; and Dr. G.B. Vick, who became famous by perpetuating the ministry that Dr. Norris started.

1. This is where the action has been in *fundamentalism*. These people are part of the big circle of fundamentalism, but we have some basic disagreements. There have been some invisible fences between us that are now rising up and becoming more visible. We did not build those fences. They started saying that we are shallow and too evangelistic. They started accusing us of promoting easy-believism. We have no choice but to say that they are wrong. They criticize us because of our excitement and our informality. The action in fundamentalism in this generation has come from Southern Baptist fundamentalists, that is, those who left the Southern Baptist Convention and those they have influenced.

2. The main issue of difference is on the matter of separation. The GARB and the American Baptists divided basically over doctrine. When Dr. J. Frank Norris pulled out of the Southern Baptist Convention, most Southern Baptist preachers believed that the Bible was the Word of God. The Bible was not issue in those days. It was an ecclesiastical issue, a type of worship issue, and a separation issue. They pulled out over mixed bathing being wrong. They pulled out over social drinking being wrong. They pulled out over teaching evolution. They pulled out over matters of separation, and matters of type of worship.

Consequently, the hottest group in America over the last forty years consists of those that pulled out of the Southern Baptist Convention.

That forms the entire circumference of what we call *fundamentalism*. If you wonder why *fundamentalists* do not get along, it is because we are not all the same type of *fundamentalists*. When some American Baptist *fundamentalists* visit First Baptist Church in Hammond, they may think that we are too wild. That is because they still have some American Baptist left in them. They think we should have committees to run everything in the church. They are *fundamentalists* in the sense that they became fed up with what they were in, but, they did not come out totally. They rebelled only against the things that irritated them.

Pastor's School Fundamentalists

Today, there is another group of *fundamentalists* quietly becoming the largest group in the nation. I call this group the Pastor's School fundamentalists. Without anybody planning or organizing a thing, God raised up the Pastor's School at the First Baptist Church of Hammond. Its annual meeting is larger than the Baptist Bible Fellowship annual convention. The Southwide Baptist Fellowship does not have as many preachers as Pastors' School has every year. Preachers from all over this country who want to do something for God have come to a Pastors' School and have had their lives and ministries transformed.

In addition to that, the First Baptist Church Youth Conference draws the largest group of fundamental young people of any youth conference in the nation. Other of these groups have copied and have not attracted a fraction of the young people. Without any effort to organize, God has raised up this movement.

Let me make several observations.

1. Groups one and two are very much alike. The American Baptist Fundamentalists and the Protestant Fundamentalists are very similar to each other.

2. Group two provides most of the schools. Consider the schools which came from group one. Cedarville, Maranatha, and Pillsbury are schools that came from the group that came from the American Baptists. Now, consider the schools that came from the Protestant fundamentalists such as Wheaton, Moody, Pensacola, and Bob Jones University. That is the group that has been educating our Baptist preachers. I have nothing against a plumber, a cabinet maker, a lawyer, an accountant, or a doctor being trained by those schools, but I think a Baptist preacher ought to go to a Baptist school. That is why so many Baptist preachers do not know Baptist doctrines. Group three has allowed group two to train their preachers, and group two has trained them to believe in the invisible church. Group three is not the same as it used to be because we have gone to group two to get our training for our preachers.

I have some dear friends in groups one and two. I am not criticizing them. I am merely giving you the history of the *fundamentalist* movement.

Consider the schools in group three. Baptist Bible College was probably the best when it started. When Tennessee Temple came along, it was probably the best. Today, Hyles-Anderson is known to be the best school for training Baptist preachers. I thank God for the new Baptist colleges which are coming on the scene. Dr. Bob Gray has one in Longview, Texas. Dr. Jim Vineyard has one in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. I am glad for these other Baptist colleges because I believe that group three must rain its own.

3. Another thing that has hurt group three is that group two has basically provided all of the literature. When you provide somebody literature, you have a tremendous influence on them. The AWANA Clubs are an example of this. There were good clubs which came from group two. They ought to be used in group two churches, but we have put them in our group three churches. The AWANAS came from churches that were very formal and less evangelistic.

Most of the Christian school books come from Pensacola and Bob Jones. They are good books. There is nothing wrong with them. I am just simply showing you that the Protestant *fundamentalists* have provided most of the literature for the Southern Baptist *fundamentalists*, yet the Southern Baptists *fundamentalists* are the ones that have been red-hot. Why is that the case? Because the guy that is red-hot does not want to take time to write a commentary. Most of the literature being used in the group three churches is being provided by the people in group two. We simply are not providing our own.

4. There has always been an unseen wall that we have not allowed to divide us. Those of us in group three have not said much about the more formal services of group one and group two. But, in recent days, groups one and two have begun attacking group three. As a result, those of us in group three are going to need to defend those things which we believe to be important. We must defend altar calls. We must defend the old-time religion, because groups one and two are basically going back to their origin of formal worship services. In order to preserve what we have had through these years those of us in group three are going to have to stand for what we have had. They are shooting at us, and we have no recourse but to defend our position.

What about the *new evangelicals*? They are the soft part of each of the three groups. They are compromising part of all three groups. The GARB has deteriorated some. The deteriorated crowd are *new evangelicals*. The CBA has deteriorated some. The deteriorated portion are the *new evangelicals*. The Southern Baptists *fundamentalists* have deteriorated some, and they have some *new evangelicals*.

When a church in group three calls a pastor from group one, there is a catastrophe ahead. As long as we stay apart, we can get along. I happen to think that we are as smart as they are. We have become such a melting pot that the average church does not realize that there is a difference. There are some good men in group one, but let them be good in their own group. They are in their element. There are some good men in group two, but they will teach our people that the local church is one church and the invisible church is another. They also will have their formal worship services. I am not against group two, but let them stay in group two. Let us continue to be group three.

I am not going to spend my life fighting groups one and two because I admire them in some ways. I will keep admiring them as long as they do not try to influence group three, because group three is the hope of the nation.

Chapter Five

The Autonomy of the Church

The autonomy of a church means that a church is supposed to run by itself. The word automobile means a car that is a self-running instrument or piece of machinery. Likewise, the autonomous church means that the church is supposed to be self-running.

But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes which I also hate. Revelation 2:6

So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes which thing I hate. Revelation 2:15

The word Nicolaitanes is a word which means to conquer the laity. It is referring to an outside force that takes control over a part of a New Testament church. When a church ceases to be autonomous it forfeits the right to call itself a New Testament church. It can still call itself a church because the word church means assembly. A Catholic church can call itself a church, but it is not a New Testament church. It is an assembly, but not the one that Jesus started.

1. Each church is a self-operating entity. Each church is supposed to be **totally** self-operating. It is not the business of any other church what the First Baptist Church does. It is likewise not the business of the First Baptist Church what any other church does. Every church is supposed to be a self-operating entity.

There is no mention anywhere in the Bible of a denomination. Denominations are man-made. Churches are God-made. If a church yields a part of her authority to any external source, she ceases to be a New Testament church. A New Testament church is self-operating or autonomous. Denominations have done more to destroy the work of God than taverns have. In fact, it is tragic how denominations destroy churches.

2. Each church is a self-operating entity and should stay that way. Churches are destroyed because they lose their autonomy. The Southern Baptists like to claim that they have 33,000 independent churches. That is not really true. They voted me out because I would not support their colleges and their cooperative program. Their churches are not independent; they are under the control of the convention.

3. This is the only way a church can claim perpetuity. A church cannot claim the promise of Matthew 16:16-18 unless it is a self-operating entity. Consequently, when a church ties itself to a denomination, it ties itself to something that is dying, so life joins up with death. The denomination destroys the life of the church, because life plus death equals death. God never said, *Upon this rock I will build my denomination and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.* God did not say, *Upon this rock I will build my fellowship and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.* He said, *Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.* The independent local church was promised divine perpetuity.

4. When we unite, we lose that claim. When churches unite, the organization becomes bigger than the church, so it ceases to be a church. It becomes churches. Since they are united, they cannot claim divine perpetuity.

5. Let us not unite. When I was in the Southern Baptist Convention, I often heard it said by denominational leaders, "Let's not split." The Southwide Baptist Fellowship is saying the same thing now. The Baptist Bible Fellowship is also saying it. I would like to say, "Let's not unite." I am not an isolationist, but if you do not unite, you do not have to worry about splitting. In fact, every church ought to be its own split. It

should operate itself and run its own business without interference from other churches.

6. Union brings death because when something that has been promised life unites itself with something that has not been promised life, it has attached itself to death and therefore will die. I have been warning Baptist people across America for years about the AWANA program. The AWANA is a inter-denominational program for children that churches use. Because it is not Baptist, it is not right on some things. I have warned Baptists about AWANA, not because I thought the AWANA Program was bad, but because every organization like it is eventually going to die because it is not operated by a church, which is the only organization promised divine perpetuity. If we get attached to an organization like that we will die with it.

A pastor went to a church and tried to stop the AWANA. The people threatened to vote him out. They were more loyal to an outside organization than they were to their own pastor. Every youth program ought to be local church centered and operated. Every children's program ought to be local church centered and operated. A local church should not allow an outside influence as powerful as the AWANA inside the church because it will create loyalties outside of the church. Churches all over this nation that have AWANA are going to have one of three things happen to them.

- 1. They have a strong enough pastor to get it out of the church.**
- 2. They are going to have trouble in the church.**
- 3. The pastor is going to have to compromise and stay with the AWANAS.**

When living organizations join up with dying organizations, death enters into the living organization.

For many years I had a high regard for the Gideons, but I was worried about them because they were not affiliated with the local church. I spoke at National Gideon Conventions in Canada and the United States. The day came when I could no longer support the Gideons. One day in a motel room I picked up a "Bible." It was not the King James Bible. They are now putting out different kinds of "Bibles."

Let me explain what happens. A man from the Gideons comes to speak in a church to raise money to help place Bibles in motels and schools across America; then, that organization changes. While an organization is good, we join up with it, but in so doing, we build the machinery for self-destruction. The best philosophy is not to join up with that organization at all. The local church should operate itself.

People often ask me to print literature for churches use. I do not do it because some people would become more loyal to me than to their local pastor. Then, if the pastor decided not to use my literature, some people may follow me instead of him. The church would no longer be autonomous. There is not one program at the First Baptist Church of Hammond that subscribes churches to be a part of it. If somebody wants to start a Phoster Club, they can start a Phoster Club and call it anything they want. We do not tell them what to do, nor do we send a representative to keep their club going.

Union brings death. As the other thing dies, the church dies as well. When churches unite and one church dies, it affects all of the other churches.

7. Our mistake is that when we divide, we do not have enough sense to stay divided. The split does not have enough sense to remain split. Churches often decide to leave a denomination, yet turn right around and unite with another organization.

What should be the fellowship between churches?

- 1. No denomination.**
- 2. No outside interference whatsoever.**

Let me give you an idea of how it should be. I preached for a pastor in Mocksville, North Carolina. The

pastor sent out letters to other churches announcing that I was going to be there, and inviting them to attend and to bring some of their people. It was one church's meeting. All the churches in the area did not get together. One church sponsored the meeting. The pastor did not ask the other churches to do anything. Busses came from all over the area, but nobody was blacklisted if they did not come, voted out if they did not cooperate, or reprimanded if they did not bring their people. That is God's plan. I am not suggesting that we should not cooperate, but that we should not unite.

Tragically, when we divide, we often do not have enough sense to stay divided. When we split we do not have enough sense to stay split. We want to start something else. That something else is a uniting in a fellowship of churches, and the minute it starts, death sets in, because human organizations start off dying. The church, however, can always stand. Churches die because they unite.

8. We unite not realizing that we are uniting. Let me show several ways churches unite without realizing that they are uniting.

(1) Ministerial groups. I am referring to fundamental ministerial groups, not liberal ministerial associations. There is a city in this nation where a group of fundamental preachers organized a fundamental ministerial group. That sounds good. It is not a sin. There are groups like that all over the country, so what is wrong with these groups? Before long, they elect a chairman who is over the ministerial group. That means that he has been given a title above the title of pastor. There is a group like this that I used to preach to every year.

Several years ago, in the midst of the attacks against me, one of the preachers in that group turned against me. I contend that he has a right not to be for me. But, what happened? Many of my friends blacklisted him. Even though I felt he was wrong in the position he had taken against me, they had taken away his freedom. They did to him what the Southern Baptist Convention does to churches.

It is not slavery we are against, it is our being enslaved we are against. We do not mind being the boss. We do not want to be in Egypt under Pharaoh. We want to go out into the wilderness, reorganize, and become a Pharaoh ourselves. There is nothing sinful about a fundamental ministerial group. In itself, it is not bad, but it creates the machinery for decay in the future.

(2) Union meetings. There are fundamental churches that get together every year and conduct joint, area-wide revival meeting. I have had preachers criticize other men because they decided not to cooperate with those meetings any more. They call him a loner and say he is uncooperative. That is the same thing the Southern Baptists did to me. A preacher has a perfect right not to cooperate. This is what causes churches to die. We ought to work with each other, but we ought to work in a way which maintains our independence from each other. For example, our Pastors' School is like a cafeteria. A preacher can take what he wants and leave the rest. It is our own meeting, and nobody is blacklisted if he chooses not to come. We are supposed to cooperate with each other when a local church has an endeavor, if we so choose; but it is always unwise to build a canopy over all of us.

(3) Joint schools. All across America there are schools that are started by groups of churches. Church-schools ought to be started by a church. If ten churches start a school, the standards of that school will only be as strong as the weakest of those ten churches. Eventually, the pastor of the weakest church may be elected as president of the school board. One church should start a school and if other pastors want to send their students they may, but if they choose another school, that is perfectly acceptable. The inter-denominational, cooperative schools do not remain useful nearly as long as church operated schools.

First Baptist Church operates Hammond Baptist Schools. First Baptist Church owns Hammond Baptist Schools. It is on our property, we have our own principals and teachers, we operate it, and we have our own board. Other Baptist churches send us students every year, but it is not those churches' business how Hammond

Baptist Schools are operated. We operate it like we think God wants it operated. If they like that, they can come, but if they do not like that, they can send their students elsewhere. If a group of preachers start a school, the standards will deteriorate quickly. God's plan is the local church.

(4) Self accreditation. Across America many states require that church-schools be accredited. The state says we must have our schools accredited, yet many preachers have refused to allow the state to accredit their schools. In some cases the state has come back with a suggestion of a compromise. They said that we could set up our own accreditation board and accredit our own schools. They are basically saying that we must answer to somebody. We are not to answer to anybody outside of the local church! There is no divine institution above the local church!

Churches get together and set up a fundamental accrediting association. It sounds good, but it is machinery that will deteriorate and someday become just like the accrediting association they could not cooperate with in the first place. It is not just the accreditation by the North Central Association that is wrong. It is wrong when any church accredits another church. Nobody has a right to inspect the local church outside the local church. Any accreditation leads to death. The only difference between bad accreditation and good accreditation is how much longer you are going to live before you die.

(5) Literature. I do not determine what is taught at another Baptist church. I want their pastor to decide. It is not my business what another church teaches. I could have literature going out from First Baptist Church of Hammond to thousands of churches all across America. Preachers beg me to publish materials that they could use in their churches. I do not feel that it is the right thing to do. I do not mind them using my materials for ideas to create their own, but I do not want their churches to become more loyal to me than they are their own pastor.

There was a day you could trust some publishing houses. Many were fine as long as they were doctrinally correct, but they have deteriorated and taken some of their loyal churches with them. Nothing causes the decay of a denomination as much as its literature.

Many years ago, when I was a Southern Baptist, we had study courses which met five nights a week. We would study from a book put out by the Southern Baptist Convention's Boardman Press. Diplomas were given out when a person finished one of the courses. One day, I decided to teach one of the lessons straight from the Bible without using their study books. At the completion of the course, I wrote and asked them to send me the diplomas. They wrote back and asked me what materials I had used. I wrote them back and informed them that I had used the Bible. They wrote back to let me know that they would not send the diplomas because we did not use Baptist literature materials. That was the last time I used their materials.

The preacher should decide what materials are used in the church, or he should write the Sunday school lessons. Let the church decide what is taught. There is nothing wrong with having outside literature, but you are subscribing yourself to something that will change you when it dies. Every church in America needs to stop and realize that the Nicolaitanes doctrine is creeping in. While we say we are independent and autonomous, we yoke up with death and do not know it.

(6) Fellowships. Every year at Pastors' School people ask me to start a fellowship. Fellowship means that we get together to enjoy each other with no strings attached. We do not need any more organizations. Dr. Jack Trieber in southern California has a Pastors' School every year. Anybody who wants to can attend. It is his Pastors' School, so he ought to operate it without the interference of an organization. I do not tell him how to run his Pastors' School. If he wants to ask my advice, I will give it to him, but it is his Pastors' School.

(7) Missionaries. The Southern Baptist Convention calls it their cooperative program. Southern Baptist churches do not individually decide with missionaries they will support. The church sends money to the Cooperative Program. Much of that money goes to operate their neo-evangelical and liberal schools, but they

do not advertise that. They put missions out as the bait.

What is God's plan? When a man decides to go to the mission field, he should go to New Testament churches and preach, and let the churches individually decide whether or not to support him. That is the New Testament plan. The Southern Baptist Convention told me that I had to support the cooperative program or I would get my walking papers. I took my walking papers. They told me to support their schools or not be a Southern Baptist. I would not give a dime to a school that does not believe that the Bible is the Word of God.

(8) A group gets together to start churches. The problem is that the group will want to control the churches they start. There is nothing wrong with a church as long as they are answerable to a church, and not to a group. Otherwise, you have the framework of death.

What is the danger?

1. An organization is placed above the church. A preacher in Texas used to say that there is as much Scripture for having a tavern as there is for having a denomination. The problem with a denomination is that you end up with a district superintendent who is above the preacher. Nobody is supposed to be above the office of pastor. That is the highest office in the Bible.

2. Teaching from without the church is deadly. Much of the wrong doctrine that infiltrates our churches comes from these types of unions that never should have happened in the first place.

3. An office is established which is above the pastor. Unfortunately, these in the position of helping the pastor eventually become a power trying to tell the pastor what he can or cannot do.

4. They are formed because of the lack of faith. Union is always caused by the deterioration of faith. The centralization of power is caused by the deterioration of faith. The reason a group of farmers form a co-op is in case God does not send rain. This is a substitute god. America got along pretty well before there were any co-ops, and before everybody got together so much.

Franklin D. Roosevelt was a great leader, but he caused America to become a united movement by starting various co-op programs. The Bible says that God will supply all our needs according to His riches. So, why do we need a denomination? I will tell you exactly why. We lose some of our faith in God.

What more could we want than, Lo, I am with you always, or, For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them, or, upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

My heart aches for what has happened to churches across this nation. Many churches that call themselves Independent Baptists are not really Independent Baptists.

When Dr. Ironside was the pastor of the Moody Church in Chicago, he decided to form a group of men to run the business of the church. He basically turned the leadership of the church over to that group of men and decided that he would just do the preaching. It worked beautifully because these men loved him, and wanted to please him, but when he died, he had created the machinery for the destruction of their soul-winning program. What happened? A good pastor and some good men set up some bad machinery that worked as long as they were alive, but self-destructed when they died.

Chapter Six

A Church Losing Its Independence and Not Knowing It

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them: and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. II Corinthians 6:14-18

You do not have to come out from among them if you never were a part of them. If you do not go in, you do not have to come out. That is a great statement. More great soul-winning *fundamental* churches have fallen by the wayside in the last twenty years as a result of what I am going to cover in this chapter than over any other reason. These were good churches that did not intend to become liberal, but they became unless because they lost their independence and did not know it.

Most *fundamental* churches do not go liberal first. They go useless first. Once they go useless they have to find some reason to explain their uselessness. They end up explaining that growing churches and soul-winning churches are shallow. Then, they become new evangelical and eventually change their doctrine and become liberal. The first step is the step to uselessness. Let me explain to you exactly how this happens.

1. We unite for a good cause. Liberals want to join up with a *fundamentalist*, because a liberal wants the fire from the *fundamentalist*. A liberal can not start a fire, nor keep one going unless somebody else starts it. So, he wants all the *fundamentalists* that he can get. That is one reason why they have lured Billy Graham through these years. They do not have any fire of their own, so they need somebody who still believes the Bible to join their camp to help them.

The *fundamental* preacher has conviction, so he will not join with a liberal. When I was a young preacher, there basically were no new evangelicals. There were liberals and there were Bible believers. When I was a young preacher, you could not find a Southern Baptist preacher who did not believe the Bible. Last year the Southern Baptist Convention voted by a small margin to have a Bible believer as its president. When I was a young man, you would not have gotten 2% of the people to vote for a man who did not believe the Bible.

No *fundamentalist* ought to join up with a liberal. The Bible says, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." That does not give any specifics as to what not to link up with an unbeliever to do. It does not say not to be religiously unequally yoked together with unbelievers. It does not say not to be politically unequally yoked together with unbelievers. It simply says, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." That includes any type of cause.

The Devil is not finished. He will continue trying to get a *fundamentalist* yoked up with a liberal, because he wants to destroy the testimony of *fundamentalism* in America. The Devil knows that if he can get the *fundamentalist* yoked up to the liberals that this country is gone. So, the Devil invented something else.

When I was a young preacher, a new kind of person came on the scene known as the neo-orthodox. A neo-orthodox is someone who believes the liberalism, but talks like a *fundamentalist*. He says he believes the Bible, but he does not mean it in the same way we do. He believes the Bible is inspired like Shakespeare is inspired. The Devil is trying to get the *fundamentalist* and the liberal to join together, so he finds somebody who talks like a *fundamentalist* to deceive many *fundamental* people.

A preacher says he believes the Bible is a good book and that parts of it are inspired. He does not believe what we believe. These neo-orthodox people talk well, but the Devil uses them to get the

fundamentalist to join up with the liberals, by putting them in between.

Most *fundamentalists* did not fall for this trick, so the Devil decided to take it a step further. He brought someone else into the picture, called the new evangelical. This is the new neo-orthodox. The neo-orthodox believes like the liberal, but talks like the *fundamentalists*. The new evangelical believes like the *fundamentalist*, but talks like the liberal. He does not want to associate himself with the old hell-fire and brimstone crowd.

I was watching an interview with a Nashville leader one day who said, "I am a born-again Christian. Now, of course I am not a *fundamentalist*. I am an evangelical." He did not want to associate himself with the *fundamental* crowd. He wants to have the popularity of the liberals and believe like the *fundamentalists*. The evangelicals do not want the stigma of the old-time religion. They do not want the stigma of an altar call. They do not want the stigma of hell-fire and brimstone preaching. The evangelicals would rather associate with liberals than with fundamentalists, because they are more concerned with how sweet you are, than how right you are.

Most of us did not fall for that, but the Devil was still not through. He finally knocked a home run. He brought in a political campaign. The *fundamentalists* fell for it and joined up with the new evangelicals. That has destroyed more churches than any single thing in this generation. What the liberal could not do, the neo-orthodox could not do, and the new evangelical could not do, the political campaigns did.

I was invited to a meeting of about twenty-five leaders in America. One stood and said, "Gentlemen, it is time that God's people decided to take over the politics in America. We are going to organize and take over the precincts of America and the Republican Party."

That sounded good. It would sound good to anybody if you do not stop and consider what II Corinthians 6:14 says. At first I was all for it. Later, we were sitting around the table talking. The man beside me had a tremendous personality. He had charisma and I was really impressed with him. I was just like a fish ready to bite. I said, "By the way, what church do you pastor?"

He said, "I do not pastor any church."

I said, "Well, what ministry do you lead?"

He said, "I am the director of the _____ denomination."

It was a group that believes you must get baptized in order to get saved. I was about to join in a campaign to save America by yoking up with a man who was a leader of a false doctrine. This is exactly what has happened to churches all over this nation.

What the liberal could not do, the neo-orthodox could not do, and the new evangelical could not do, the gay rights issue has done. Preachers have linked up with others who are liberal in their doctrinal beliefs, but who are like minded in their views on gay-rights. The same thing has happened with the abortion issue. I hate abortion, but I wonder how many churches in America that once were great soul-winning churches have lost their zeal for the lost because they got wrapped up in the gay rights, or abortion issue. Those issues have joined the *fundamentalist* with the liberal when nothing else in this world could do it. I have seen this happen over and over again.

We worry that our churches are going to lose their freedom and that we will be forced to get our Sunday schools licensed. We fear that they will take away our freedom and force us to have a license to preach. So, we join up with the liberals to fight for freedom. We ought to fight for our freedom, but we ought not to join up with the Devil to fight for our freedom. It is wrong to join up with a group of people who think that Jesus Christ is the illegitimate child of an adulteress, and who make fun of our Bible, our Christ, the Virgin birth and everything that is descent and sacred.

We have destroyed *fundamentalism* in our generation because of these good things that brought us together when nothing else could. The same is true about the issue of the separation of church and state. A group of *fundamental* Baptists and others joined with false teachers to have big rallies, because both were being persecuted by the government. Some of my good friends went to those meetings. They asked me to speak in Washington, DC at one big rally. When I found out who was involved, I refused.

My Bible still says that we are not to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. Not doing so is destroying many of our churches in America.

2. We unite for a good cause; then we discover that we differ on more important things than those about which we agreed. The man in early American history who did more to make it possible to have our religious freedom was James Madison. He was the man who stood, not just for separation of church and state, but who also said that the church should stay out of the state's business and the state should stay out of the church's business. He compared it to two kingdoms, like Canada and the United States. He is what happened.

George Washington, Patrick Henry and Thomas Jefferson joined this campaign and won for us our freedom. When they were through, they found that they differed on issues which were more important than the issues which had united them. Let me illustrate. In the Bible days, the Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection from the dead. The Pharisees did. Paul was hated by both. The Sadducees and the Pharisees got together on a common cause, which was their hatred for Paul. This is what is happening in America.

Many years ago a couple visited one service at the First Baptist Church, and I preached against Communism. They belonged to the John Birch Society. They joined the church because we hated Communism as much as the John Birch Society did. That is not a good reason to join the church. You should join a church because it believes the Bible. You should join a church because it hates sin. You should join a church because it hates all sins, not just Communism. You should join a church because it believes that every word in the Bible is the Word of God. Watch out for one-issue churches, and watch out for one-issue people.

The Bible says, *If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.* The way you save a nation is not for God's people to get involved in politics, but to get involved in prayer and repentance.

Fundamentalists had never before been big shots. We got invited to a Presidential Prayer Breakfast, where fundamental preachers joined with Jews who believe that Mary was an adulteress and Jesus was an illegitimate child, Catholic Priests who do not believe anything, and compromising members of the National Council of Churches. We became big shots and got our pictures in the paper. What happened? Churches all over America got wrapped up in trying to save America man's way instead of God's way. We lost our churches by the hundreds.

I know of Hyles-Anderson College graduates who became wrapped up in secondary matters. If we are supposed to come out from among them, would it not be wisest not to even go in among them?

The Bible tells us not to be yoked up with some things. We are not to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. We are not to be unequally yoked together with darkness or sin. We are not to be unequally yoked together with unfaithful people. We are not to be unequally yoked together with idols. Once you have started, there is no stopping.

I received a copy of the program for a film festival program being held on the campus of a Christian college which was started by a fundamental church just one year before we started Hyles-Anderson College. They were promoting Hollywood films on the campus of this Christian college. I spent a day in Atlanta, Georgia, begging the founder of this college not to run with the wrong crowd. I have preached against Hollywood my entire ministry, and I do not intend to stop. That shows you how quickly a college can change. It started with their affiliation with the world through political campaigns.

Years ago, I was preaching in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Two fine-looking young men walked in the back. After the service they asked if they could drive me to the airport. One of these young men was the founder of that school, and the pastor of a church. He invited me to come to his church and to give him advice on how to build a great church. I went to his church and helped him organize his Sunday school. I helped him organize his bus ministry. He came to Pastors' School, and brought his staff with him. He built a great soul-winning church. How did he get the point of allowing a Hollywood film festival to be held on his college campus?

He decided to join hands with the politicians, who join hands with the new evangelicals, who join hands with the neo-orthodox, who join hands with the liberals. When you start speaking well of new evangelicals, you are in trouble. If young people go to a Christian college to see these movies, they are going to learn these actors and eventually go to the local theaters to see R-rated movies.

I am determined to keep soul winning as the main thing at Hyles-Anderson College. America must have some old-fashioned rock-ribbed *fundamental* colleges.

That is one reason why the gates of Hell have not prevailed against the First Baptist Church of Hammond, Indiana. We preach against every sin known to man. We teach the Bible, warn people, exhort, preach the word, go soul-winning, try to get people right with God, get folks to pray and to believe in the Bible. It is not a one-issue church, and Christianity is not a one-issue faith.

Literally hundreds of churches have died because the Devil has succeeded in getting the liberal joined up with the *fundamentalist*. He could not get the *fundamentalist* to do it, so he introduced the neo-orthodox, who believes like the liberal, but talks like the *fundamentalist*. Then he introduced the new evangelical who believes like the *fundamentalist*, but talks like the liberal. Finally, he introduced one big issue that every decent person hates, and started a big campaign. That one issue did what the others could not do. It broke down the wall between *fundamentalists* and the liberals.

Chapter Seven

Where Most False Churches Lost Their Character or Franchise

After these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich to the abundance of her delicacies. And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. Revelation 18:1-4

The church is a family. I do not mean all Christians, but the local body of believers like First Baptist Church of Hammond, Indiana, is a family. Do not forget that. I will come back to that thought at the end of this chapter.

Most churches are really not churches. A church must earn the right and qualify to be called a real church. Most Baptist churches are not churches. In fact, there are very few churches. I will go a step further. Many of the churches in America called *First Baptist Church* have lost their franchise and are no longer churches.

1. A charter or the right to be called a church can be lost. A local church is like a franchise. God gives us the right to be called a church. Certain conditions must be met in order for a McDonald's restaurant to be allowed to keep the McDonald's sign over its building. Certain conditions also must be met in order to keep the Kentucky Fried Chicken sign over a building. If those conditions are not met, the right to be called McDonald's or Kentucky Fried Chicken will be lost. It is possible for a group of people who once were a church to cease being a church in God's eyes.

The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches. Revelation 1:20

Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. Revelation 2:4, 5

God told the church at Ephesus to straighten up or they would not be a church anymore. They might still meet and have church services, but God threatened that they would lose their franchise or charter. In other words, they would no longer be a church.

There is something that a church can do to cease being a church in the sight of God. In verse five we see what exactly that it was that caused them to be on probation with God as a church. *Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works.* What are the *first works* God gave the New Testament church to do? Jesus was going back to Heaven, and was on the mount. He met with the disciples and He gave them the first command.

Go therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen. Matthew 28:19,20

The first command to the New Testament church was soul winning. God was telling the church at Ephesus that if they continued not being a soul-winning church that they would no longer be a church, and would lose their franchise.

I was talking to a preacher one day about soul winning. We were preaching on the same program, and after the meeting was over he said to me, "It was good to have such a blend on this program. Your church is a soul-winning church, and my church is more of a Bible teaching church rather than a soul-winning church. It was nice to have two different types of churches represented here in this meeting?"

I said, "We do not have two types of churches represented on this program. Yours is not a church.:

He said, "Why?"

I took him to Revelation chapter two and showed him what God said to the church at Ephesus. The truth is, a church that is not a soul-winning church is not qualified to be called a church.

There are literally thousands of churches in this nation that at one time were soul-winning churches, but they became enchanted with the so-called "deeper life" movement, and are no longer winning souls. A church that is not a soul-winning church is not a church. It can call itself a church all it wants, but God says it has lost its candlestick, or charter.

2. Often the charter is lost because the church is not coming out of this world. Most churches cease to be churches or lose their charter, because they did not come out of the world. That usually happens before they quit soul winning.

3. So to be coming out is as much a requirement of being a New Testament church as assembling. You must assemble to be a church, but there is more. You must be called out of something in order to be a church as well.

The word church is the word *ekklesia*. ek means out of and klesis means called. The word *ekklesia* means called-out assembly. It is not just an assembly. It is a called-out assembly. The word panegurais in the Greek meaning assembly. The word *ekklesia*, is not just an assembly. It is leaving a larger assembly and going to a smaller assembly.

This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spoke to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us: Acts 7:38

This was referring to Moses. The church was in the wilderness. The Israelites could have assembled in Egypt and not have been called a church. If all of the Jews had come together and met somewhere in Egypt, they would not have been a church. They would have been an assembly, but they would not have been a called-out assembly. God told Moses to lead the people out of Egypt. Moses went to Pharaoh and said, "Let my people go."

Pharaoh refused, so God sent the plagues.

Finally Pharaoh said, "Stay here in Egypt and sacrifice to your God."

Moses said, "No, we cannot do that."

Pharaoh said, "Then, do not go very far."

Moses said, "We are going to go as far as we are supposed to go."

He said, "Then do not take your wives and your children."

Moses said, "Not one hoof of one animal is going to be left here."

If they had assembled in Egypt they would not have been called a church, because the word church is a called-out assembly. That shows us two things.

1. A church assembled in the world is not a church. That is why many charismatic churches are not

churches. They live like the world. They are assembled in the world. They dress like the world, talk like the world, sing like the world, wiggle like the world while they are singing, and use the beat of the world in their music. They are in the world. You are not a church unless you come out of the world and assemble.

2. A church that brings the world out with it is not a church. A church must leave the world. It means that a church must leave the world's music, the world's dress, the world's lingo, the world's fun, and the world's pleasures. These unseparated churches and their preachers like to say that being a Christian does not make you a "dud." **It does to the world.** We are not to bring with us the values and activities of the world.

A man came to my office one time and said to me, "Dr. Hyles, I have a plan that will save America." I said, "Let me hear it."

He said, "I am going to go to Hollywood and become a movie star. I am going to become the idol of the American people and a hero to the young people. At the peak of my success I am going to announce that I am a born-again Christian and that I want all my fans to become born-again Christians too. All America would get saved."

My Bible says that even if one would rise from the dead, they would not believe. That is not God's plan. Too many big churches today are popular because they give some Bible and allow the people to stay in the world. They are not really churches because you must come out of the world in order to be a church. The out of part is just as important to being a New Testament church as the assembly part. It is not an assembly in the world. It is a called-out assembly, so to be coming out is as much a requirement as being as assembly in order to be a New Testament church.

No group of people have a right to call themselves a church if they are not out of the world. People sometimes get a little upset with the rules at First Baptist Church and transfer their membership to other churches. Actually, they often transfer their membership to a Baptist country club. People will hide behind different facades, but the real reason is our soul winning and separation.

From what are we supposed to come?

1. Out of the world.

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. I John 2:15

John 17:6 tells us that we are to come out of the world. Many years ago I had a young college football player come to my church in Texas and preach. He was a good fundamental preacher, but he decided to play professional football. They had a chapel service for about fifteen minutes before each game and called it "church." This is not church. This man said to me, "I can become an All-pro football player, and God will use that." God does not need our athletic talent or physical strength. God does not need our beauty. God needs us to give Him our lives, but He also demands that we come out of the world.

2. Out of the Catholic church.

And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgement of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication... Revelation 17:1, 2a

A whore in the Bible is a symbol of false religion. The tower of Babel was an effort for man to work his way to Heaven. False religion started under Nimrod, and was the beginning of what would become the Catholic church. The word waters in the Bible often symbolizes nations. The word Catholic means universal.

The Bible tells us that this whore wanted to commit fornication with the kings of the earth. That means that whatever church this is referring to is a proponent of not separating church and state. She wants to control the state. If you go to South America, you will discover that the Catholic church controls the government. Go to Italy and you will find the same thing. In fact, in any nation where the Catholic church is strongest, you will find the union of church and state.

And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication. Revelation 17:4

Go to the Vatican City, and you will see this right before your eyes.

And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration. Revelation 17:5, 6

The Catholic church has probably killed more people than all the wicked kings in the world put together.

And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. Revelation 17:9

Rome is the City of Seven Hills. This is a church that is the union of church and state. It is a church that is wealthy. It is a church that is all over the world or universal. It is a church that is headquartered in the city of Rome.

And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not her plagues. Revelation 18:4

I am weary of television evangelists interviewing Catholic priests on their telecasts. It is of the Devil. The Bible says to come out of the Catholic church.

3. Out of Protestant churches.

The whore has a bunch of harlots for daughters. At the Reformation a bunch of little harlot denominations came out of the whore. Who are they? Methodism. Presbyterianism. Episcopalianism. Lutheranism. No church is a church that came out of the mother of harlots. The New Testament church came from Jesus Christ Himself. I dare you to find a person that can prove that Baptists came from the Catholic church. We did not. Protestant churches are not churches. For one thing, they do not baptize. How can a church be a church if it disobeys the second thing that Jesus told it to do which was to baptize converts in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost!

I was preaching in Minnesota on a Monday and Tuesday, and I went to the restaurant next to the motel for breakfast. I got a newspaper, and in the headlines it read, Catholics and Lutherans join together. That is one of the daughters coming back home to mama. Eventually all of the babies will come back home. They are already coming back. The National Council of Churches is basically a reunion of the children with their mother.

4. Come out of liberal and worldly churches.

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? II Corinthians 6:14

The word unequally is an interesting word. It comes from two words which means coupling or uniting something together which is a different sort. God saying not to be unequally, or coupled up with a different type, or in other words, do not be yoked up with unbelievers.

In II Corinthians 6:15, the Bible says not to be coupled with an infidel. An unbeliever is somebody who is not saved. An infidel is somebody who is not faithful to Jesus and to the Bible. Do not be yoked up with unsaved people. Do not be yoked up with denominations that do not think that Jesus is the son of God, and the Bible is the Word of God. It does not mean to hate them. If they get hungry, we should feed them. If they are cold, we should clothe them, but we are not to yoke up with them in the Lord's work. We must not be yoked up with people who are unbelievers. We must not be yoked up with people who are infidels.

In II Corinthians 6:16, the Bible says not to be coupled up with idols. The word idol means the likeness of God. We are not to be yoked up with people that have likenesses of God. We are not to have any likeness of God and Jesus is God.

Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. II Corinthians 6:17-18

At the beginning of this chapter I brought out the fact that the church is like a family. God the father said, "I will be like a daddy to you, if you will come out from among them."

From what?

The world.

From what?

The Catholic church.

From what?

The National Council of Churches.

From what?

Protestant churches.

From what?

Liberal churches.

Among what?

The Hollywood crowd.

Among what?

The Charismatic crowd.

God said that if we will do that, that He will come to our house. That is why they call the church God's house, because the Father is there. He said that if you do not come out, you are not a church and He will not be like a father to somebody who has not come out.

A small child from a Catholic family came to the First Baptist Church one Sunday morning. After church the child went back home and the child's mother asked, "Did you go to God's house this morning?"

The child said, "Yes, I went to God's house, and God was home this morning."

The local priest went to their house and warned them about sending their children to First Baptist

Church. The mother was scared, so she sent the child back to the catholic church the next Sunday. When the child came home, she asked again, "Did you go to God's house today?"

The child said, "Yes, but God wasn't home today."

That child was right, because God said that we must come out from among them before He would be our father. All across this nation Baptist churches are losing their charters. They do not believe in soul winning any more. Something else has happened, too. The Holy Spirit came and took their charter away. There were signs on the front, but God does not see those signs. They are not listed on Heaven's directory of churches.

Chapter Eight

The Church As a Family

There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil. And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters. His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east. And his sons went and feasted in their houses, every one his day; and sent and called for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them. And it was so, when the days of their feasting was gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt-offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually. Job 1:1-5

God chose a family in the patriarchal age, of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to use as an example of a typical Jewish family. They knew that some day God would provide a sacrifice, and they looked forward and trusted in that future sacrifice in the same way that we look back and trust in that past sacrifice. With that in mind, follow this logic.

The New Testament church is supposed to be a family. I often say at the beginning of a service at the First Baptist Church, "Welcome to our thrice weekly family reunion." Every Sunday morning and Sunday night we have another family reunion. That is a scriptural term because it is in keeping with the fact that the church is a family.

1. The book of Job is a perfect example of the Old Testament family.

2. The book of Job is a perfect example of the Old Testament church. There was an Old Testament church. The word *church* means, a called-out assembly. In the seventh chapter of Acts, the Israelites were called out to assemble in the wilderness and were called *the church in the wilderness*. The New Testament church was not founded in the Old Testament, but there was an Old Testament assembly. That Old Testament assembly was the family. I am not referring to the little unit, of mom, dad, and the children. I am referring to an extended family that included grandparents, great-grandparents, as well as mom, dad and children. The church unit of the Old Testament was the family.

When Esau sold his birthright to Jacob, there were three things involved in that birthright, including **the right to the priesthood of the family**. The worship or public gathering of the Old Testament was the family.

3. Notice what size these families were.

Job had ten children, which in those days was really not that large of a family, but I will use it as the average size of a family.

If each of Job's children had ten children, there would have been one thousand.

If each of them had ten children, there would have been ten thousand.

If each of them had then children, there would have been one hundred thousand.

That is five generations. A Bible generation is usually considered to be thirty-five years. Five generations would have been 175. In 175 years there would have been 111,111 people in that extended family. In the Old Testament patriarchal days, a man who died at 175 was just a boy. The average man lived much longer than that. For this example we will assume that everybody died at 175 years of age. That means that each family consisted of over 100,000 people. I am referring to the extended family.

Each of these families formed the Old Testament unit of a church or a called-out assembly. They were the worship unit. They assembled for sacrifices and worship to God.

4. The oldest or firstborn son was in charge. The other firstborn sons in all individual family units assisted him. In each family the oldest son held the priestly rights in his own family.

5. Soul winning was within the family. Cities were not popular in those days. Most people lived in the country. A family of 100,000 people covered a large amount of land. Many of the children were not going to believe. Soul winning was to be within the family. They had plenty of prospects. One family could have been larger than the city of Hammond, Indiana. They had no cars or buses, so they had to walk or go on a beast of burden to get to each other. They would explain to the family members who did not believe that one day God was going to send a sacrifice, and that sacrifice was going to pay the penalty for their sins. The lambs, bullocks, turtledoves, pigeons, doves and goats were offered according to God's sacrifice. God one day would provide Himself as a sacrifice.

God told them audibly that by faith Abel believed, and they passed this story down from generation to generation. Every person had to believe in the coming Messiah to be saved, just as we must believe in the Messiah Who has already come. Somebody had to tell them these things, but there were some who would not listen. Some people would not even come to the assembly, just as we have family members who will not come to church. Those people were human beings also. They had to reach them, so there was Old Testament soul winning. Somebody had to tell every person in those days about the Gospel.

I reject the heresy that there is one Gospel in the Old Testament and another in the New Testament. Anybody who goes to Heaven will get there by faith in Jesus Christ. God uses human instruments to get us saved. Most of those human instruments are through the local New Testament church. Likewise, most of the instruments that got them saved were through the Old Testament assembly.

When the Jews came to the promised land, God gave them certain places to live. God not only gave certain land for the tribes, but for their families. Each family was given a certain job in the tabernacle and lived in a certain place. They may have gone many miles before they found somebody who was not in their extended family. (The Mennonites and Amish have done much the same thing. They settle by families.) It was a matter of geography, or of transportation. They could not get to somebody else's family to go soul winning because they lived too far away. They went to their own relatives and witnessed to them.

6. The entire life was built around the family. This group of people or relatives assembled on a regular basis for worship, but their social life was also built around this extended family unit. Their business life was together. Their education was together.

7. The family was the city. They did not live in cities; the family was the unit of organization, especially spiritually.

Something happened.

1. Cities came. Cities have been the destruction of civilization. When the cities came, it broke down the family life.

2. Families scattered. They went to cities. We are a perfect example in America today. We have two daughters who live a thousand miles from us, and a son who lives five hundred miles away. Many families have grown children scattered across the country.

3. Many families lived near each other. This caused the building of cities. With the coming of cities,

people migrated together and many different families or portions of families lived together in the cities.

4. They started synagogues. A synagogue was not a patriarchal term. It came about because of cities. Any time ten responsible Jewish men were together, they were allowed to start a synagogue. These were not the same family members. God still wanted His people together.

5. The synagogue became what the big family had been. The synagogue was an alternative measure started by God to form a family of these people in cities, so that they would have what they had back home when they were together in families. The synagogue was started so God's people could have a family even though they did not have a family.

6. The church became to New Testament Christianity exactly what the family was to Old Testament Judaism. It is an improvised family. God wants His people to have what the old patriarchal families had, so He started a New Testament group called the assembly, or ekklesia where His people could gather and form a family.

Did you ever wonder why no rural churches are mentioned in the Bible? Every church mentioned in the Bible was in the city. With the breakdown of the family and with the coming of cities, God wanted a family atmosphere for His people, so they could have the same thing they had when they lived in the rural areas and all the families lived near each other.

And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. Acts 2:42

That sounds like what Job's family did. Job's family got together to have a feast and to have a service for God.

And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people... Acts 2:45-47a

That sounds like family. The local church is exactly what God intended to take the place of the Old Testament family. God wants his people to get together and God wants his people to belong to a family. That is what the church is to be. We must build our lives around the church. That is what they did. Our children's activities ought to be centered around the church and not the world. The same is true for our teenagers.

The church was not primarily started as a place where we come to meet God. Nor was it primarily started as a place where we preach the Gospel and get people saved. We are supposed to do that outside of the church. The church was started so that God's people could get together and have a family to encourage each other to be stronger. The church is to be as close as the kinfolks were in the Old Testament because we are the improvised Old Testament family.

That is why we call each other brothers and sisters. We are in the same family unit, and that means we should be there every time the doors are open. We are to support it with our tithe. We are to have our fun through the church and educate our children through the church. We are supposed to build our lives around the church.

God did not intend for the people in the Old Testament days to spend all of their time at the meeting. They had crops to harvest, and they had work to do at home, but they had regular meeting times.

The New Testament church is not the successor to the Temple. The Temple was not a place where God's people came to learn in fellowship.

The church is not the successor to the Tabernacle.

The church is the successor to the Old Testament family.

When they came together for their services they were so glad to see each other. They shook hands and fellowshiped with one another. That is what it was all about. The church is not a place where we come to worship God. We can worship God much better alone with Him. The church is a place to assemble as God's people so we will have a family. We must get born again before we can join the church just as we must get born before we can join a family.

What a wonderful institution the local church is! It is the New Testament family.

Although we are in a church family, it is also important that we train our own little family where we are. It was not the job of the leader of the entire extended family to do all the training. Every little local family unit was also supposed to do training. In our homes, we must teach the Bible to our children, sing Gospel songs with our children, and should praise God with our children. Then we come together as individual units into a big family meeting just like Job's family did in his day.

Chapter Nine

The Substitutes for the Church

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, and did shake kingdoms; Isaiah 14:12-16

1. Satan wanted to become king. Satan was one of the three archangels, along with Michael and Gabriel. Satan even had authority and rank over the other two. The Bible calls him the anointed cherub. Lucifer was perhaps God's deputy. Nobody knew God like Lucifer did. However, he decided that he wanted to become king. He wanted to be equal with God and take over God's throne.

2. He fought to be king. The angels were divided into three groups. Michael had his group, Lucifer had his group, and Gabriel had his group. Lucifer took his group of angels and rebelled against God and fought a war in Heaven, trying to take over Heaven.

3. He was defeated and cast out of Heaven.

4. He then wanted to hurt God. Nobody has ever wanted to hurt God like the Devil. He decided to find God's most vulnerable spot to do so. What is it that hurt God the most?

5. He knew that the best way to hurt God was through His children. If you really want to hurt somebody, hurt them through their children. You will not find a more painful way to hurt a person than that. Satan knew he was defeated, and that he was consigned to Hell. Matthew 25:41 says that he and his angels will be in the lake of fire forever, so he decided to do as much destruction as he could by striking at God where it would hurt him the most.

6. Satan does not have a way for you to go. Satan has no plan for your life. He has no alternative plan that he has devised for your life.

7. He wants you to go any way but God's way. Satan knows that we will not consciously do what he tells us. The Devil is not concerned about which way we go as long as it is not God's way. He is not dedicated to making us do what he wants us to do; he is dedicated to making us do anything but what God wants us to do. God has a purpose for our lives. Satan has set out to keep us from fulfilling that purpose. For example, God has a person he wants an individual to marry. The Devil is not concerned about his marrying a prostitute or a harlot, as long as he does not marry the person God has chosen.

8. His best shot is to get you to go your own way.

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; Isaiah 53:6a

We go astray when we go our own way. The Devil does not want us to follow his path. He wants us to follow our own path. He wants us to do our own thing. He wants us to choose the profession we want, or to go

to the college of our own choice. That is the devil's plan. He knows that we are more likely to satisfy our desires than we are to satisfy his, so he tries to keep us away from God's plan.

A man came to me and said, "Brother Hyles, I have four children. I am proud of them. All of my children have turned out good. My son is a coach in a Christian high school. He always like sports, so he chose to be a Christian coach. My daughter always like music, so she chose to go to college to study music and is an organist in a church. Another son always enjoyed working with cars, so he chose to go to mechanics school and become a mechanic. I am proud of my children."

In each case, his children had chosen to do what they wanted to do. In that case they did not turn out right. In fact, they turned out for the Devil because they turned each to his own way. That is exactly what the Devil wants us to do.

The devil's way is not what most Christians think is. The devil's way is our own way. The Devil does not care what we do as long as we do not do what God wants us to do. His best shot is to get us to go our own way. We are not a success in life unless we find what God wants us to do and do it.

9. In every area of the Christian life, he makes a counterfeit that we can choose without having to yield to God's plan. The devil's counterfeits are not bad. They look good. But, each of them is designed to get us to do something other than what God wants us to do. Let's consider some examples.

1. Baptism. Baptism is to be by immersion after salvation, so the Devil gives us a counterfeit baptism. It looks sweet. The grandparents are there, and the godfather and godmother are there. Little Johnny is going to get baptized or confirmed. That looks and sounds good because the church is considered to be good. But, it is the devil's counterfeit. Satan does not offer a wicked alternative. He offers an alternative that looks like the real thing.

2. Lord's Supper. God gave the Lord's Supper to the local church. It was to be a time to remember that Jesus died for us. The Devil made a counterfeit called the Sacrament.

3. Spirit fullness. God wants us to be filled with the Spirit so we can be witnesses unto Him. God has given us a power to be soul winners. That power is called the fullness of the Holy Spirit. The devil's counterfeit is the charismatic nonsense, where people babble in some unknown tongue and nobody gets saved. That is the devil's counterfeit. God gives His power in order to keep people out of hell, not to give us some type of emotional high.

4. Tongues. God gave a wonderful thing to the church in Jerusalem. Peter preached at Pentecost to people from every nation under Heaven. Many people could not understand the language in which Peter was preaching, so God miraculously gave these people the ability to hear the Gospel in their own languages making it possible for more people to hear the Gospel and be saved. That is the purpose of it. Christ Jesus came in the world to save sinners. The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost. The purpose of tongues is to get people saved. Satan has produced a counterfeit in the charismatic movement.

5. Bibles. The Devil has a lot of Bibles which are counterfeits.

6. Love. Lust is Satan's counterfeit for love.

7. The church. In order for something to be Satan's counterfeit, it must have several qualities.

(1) It must be something close to the real thing.

(2) It must be something we can choose.

(3) It must not in itself be bad.

The Devil knows that most Christians will not leave a fundamental Baptist church and go to a Buddhist church. He knows that he must have something as near to a fundamental Baptist church as possible in order to get us to leave a New Testament church and go our own way. How does he accomplish that?

I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. Revelation 2:9

Notice the words synagogue of Satan. That word synagogue is not capitalized, so it is not talking about a particular synagogue of Satan.

Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan. Revelation 3:9a

The word synagogue means assembly. The word church means a called-out assembly. If God's people belong to an institution that is not out of the world, it is not a church. To be a church is has to be a called-out assembly. A group of people who are religious and assemble, but are not called out of the world, are a synagogue. There are two types of groups that call themselves churches, an assembly and a called-out assembly. An assembly of people calling itself a church, but is living like the world, is not a church. It is a synagogue or assembly. No group has a right to call themselves a church, it is not separated from the world. It is merely an assembly.

The synagogue of Satan is a religious assembly other than the church. The Devil is not proud of his worshippers who are killing little babies on altars. The Devil is trying to make us believe that it does not matter where we go to church, as long as we go somewhere. He will try to get us to go to a church which is really not a church at all. The Devil will try to get us to join something that accomplishes some good in order to get us out of the local church. These institutions are sometimes good institutions, but they are not local New Testament churches. I am not implying that these institutions are of the Devil, but the Devil uses these institutions to get us away from the church.

Consider a few of the institutions that Satan uses as substitutes for the church.

1. Non-church organization. No matter how good an organization is, there is no substitute for the local New Testament church. It is not bad, but it is not a called-out assembly. The Devil wants to prevent us from building our lives and the lives of our families around the church. He knows the church is where God wants us to be, so he will do anything to cause us to substitute something else in its place. He does not want our children's lives to be built around the programs of the church. He does not want us to hear preaching three times a week. He wants us to join something that looks like a New Testament church, but which is really not a New Testament church to get us out of the institution that Jesus started.

Regardless of how spiritually mature a person is, he needs to be active in a local New Testament church. We cannot be the Christians we ought to be if we are not.

2. Home Bible studies. Wealthy people are especially prone to fall for these, because they think they have risen above hell-fire and damnation preaching. Athletes are also big for these. They have chapel services on Sunday morning to salve their consciences for not being in church, where they belong. There is some good done at these, and some people get saved at them, but much more good can be done I the local New Testament church. The Devil is afraid of the church, so he will look for any organization he can, including a Christian one to keep us out of the church. He wants us to settle for good instead of best. It is not wrong to have a Bible

study in the home if we are faithful to the church.

3. Radio preachers and television preachers. It is tragic how many preachers are struggling and having a hard time making ends meet, because their church members are sending money to these nationwide preachers. Why not put the money in an institution that Jesus started? There is no such thing as the electronic church.

4. Schools. College students often go to colleges which have their own Sunday morning services. They require the students to go there instead of going to a local New Testament church. That is not a church. I am opposed to colleges having services. We have five chapel services a week at Hyles-Anderson College, but we do not call them church. We do not have them during church to compete with church. It is a disgrace for a student to go to college for four years and never darken the door of a church. The Devil is trying to keep these young people out of the church. Where we go to get out of the church does not concern him. He just wants us to go our own way.

There is no such thing as a college church, but there is a church college. When a college runs a church it is not a church. Jesus is head of the church, not the college.

5. Non-church churches.

Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. Revelation 2:4, 5

...and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches. Revelation 1:20c

If a religious meeting is not a soul-winning group, it is a synagogue. It is just an assembly. If it is a Biblical, New Testament soul-winning church, it is an ekklesia, or a called-out assembly.

What is the devil's church? Any church **we** choose. We have no right to choose where we want to go to church. God is to lead us to the church. We are not to join a church just because we like the choir, the youth program, or the children's activities. That is not in the Bible.

Fundamentalism has left the great doctrine of the church. We have allowed the inter-denominational doctrine to infiltrate. We go to their schools, we get their literature and they have indoctrinated us to believe that the church is not a really important institution.

Many years ago I pastored a little church in the country, outside of Marshall, Texas. I was still a student in college when they called me. I was the policy when school opened each year, for all of the local pastors to come, sit on the platform and take a few minutes to tell about their church. I was a local pastor, but I was considered to be a renegade. They saved me until last, hoping that time would run out before I could speak. The pastor of one got up and said, "We are having a hayride Saturday night. We want you to come to our hayride. We are going to have hot dogs, barbecue and baked beans."

Next, the pastor of another church got up and said. "We are having a big party at the church Friday night. We are going to show some movies, play some games, and have a banquet."

Every pastor got up and told the students of some fun activities they were having at their church, trying to lure them to their church. Reluctantly, they finally came to me. I stood up and said, "I would like to welcome you to East Texas Baptist College and to our area. Grange Hall Baptist church will not be having a hayride Saturday night, we will serve no hot dogs, we will serve no hamburgers, and we will have no barbecue. We are not going to have a party or a banquet. I am not going to try to get you to come to our church that way. But, as far as I am concerned, there is only one church in this area that you ought to attend. It is the one the

Holy Spirit leads you to attend. Next Sunday morning there will be a bus here, and anybody who feels that God wants you to attend our church can come on that bus.”

Sunday morning I received a call from the bus driver asking me what to do. There were enough people waiting to fill three buses. I pastored more students at East Texas Baptist College than any other pastor. The wisest thing a Christian will ever decide to do is to build his life around a true local New Testament church, the only institution other than the home that Jesus ever started.

For many years the Bible belt has been in the south. There has been just as much religion in the north as there is in the south. What’s the difference? The influence of Christianity in the north during the last one hundred years has been inter-denominational, not emphasizing the church. The emphasis in the south has been on the church. That is the difference. Every one of these institutions that try to substitute for the church are parasites of the church and could not operate if there were no real churches.

Chapter Ten

The Church, the Body of Christ

And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church. And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons,

For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Acts 20:17, 18, 27-29

The word elders is plural and the word church is singular. We know that the church in Ephesus had more than one pastor. Luke asked them to come to Miletus to meet with him.

There is a doctrine that teaches that the church consists of all believers who also form the body of Christ. It is popular because we have listened to inter-denominational people teach the Bible. The Bible clearly teaches that all believers do **not** form the body of Christ. The local church is the body of Christ. We have developed a total misunderstanding of what the term the body of Christ means.

There are three titles given in the Bible for the position of pastor.

The fourth chapter of Ephesians refers to the title of **pastor**, which means shepherd.

The second title for that position is the title **elder**, meaning protector and feeder of the sheep. It implies that a pastor should have experience and that he should be able to counsel and lead wisely.

The third word is the word **bishop**, which is the word for overseer. It is his job as the bishop to oversee all the work of the ministry of the church.

The church at Ephesus was a large church. It was the church to which other churches looked for leadership and guidance. It had several pastors. Paul called for the elders (*plural*) of the church (*singular*). This could not be the invisible church, because it had elders. The flock spoken of here was the church members. The word overseers, in the Greek, is the same as the word bishop. God says to feed the local church over which the Holy Ghost had made them the overseers. These men or pastors could not have overseen every Christian in the whole world. It is not talking about all Christians. It is talking about the local church at Ephesus. So it is speaking in this passage about one church, not a worldwide invisible church.

Note what is said about this church in this passage.

1. Jesus purchased the church at Ephesus with His own blood. That does not mean that Jesus did not die for everybody. In this passage He is referring only to the church at Ephesus. There are so many things that happened on Calvary. We will never know all of them. For example, our healing was on Calvary. The Bible says: By his stripes we are healed. We know that Jesus died for all sinners. He also paid the penalty and shed His blood for the church at Ephesus. You cannot refute that.

Paul called for the elders of the church in Ephesus and told them to take heed that they feed the church of God, which He purchased with His own blood. He was referring only to the one church. Jesus purchased that local church with His blood. This was not a reference to all Christians, although He did die for all people. He also died to purchase the individual church.

2. He chose to call the local church His body.

And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all. Ephesians 1:22, 23.

This word church is the word ekklesia, which means a called-out assembly. All believers have not yet been called out and assembled. They will not be assembled until the rapture when the church of the firstborn will be assembled in Heaven and all believers become a church. All believers are not now a church. He is referring to the called-out assembly or local church in the city of Ephesus.

He calls it His body because Jesus purchased the church, so He owns it. He calls it a *body*. The word body means, a complete instrument. Jesus was talking about ownership. It is His body. He owns it. He purchased it with His own blood. The local church is not the body of Christ in the sense that it is His arms and legs. It is the body of Christ in the sense that He bought it and owns it. So, the church and the body are the same.

The same thing then is true about each individual local church. Each church on earth is His body that is to carry out the work of God. That is why we should do His business. It is His church. We have no right to organize it like we want to organize it. We have no right to do things we should not do. We have no right to make His church into a social club. It is a place where God's people come to be strengthened to go out in the world and tell the people about the Savior.

And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. Colossians 1:18

Since Jesus owns the church, and it is His body, He should be the one who gets the preeminence in all things. He should have preeminence in the choir. He should have preeminence in the church-school. He should have preeminence in the college. He should have preeminence in the youth program. He should have preeminence in every single ministry of the church.

Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church; Colossians 1:24

This is referring to the church at Colosse, one church. Again in both of these verses, the word church is the word ekklesia, or a called-out assembly. Again, the Bible refers to the church as the body of Christ. He owns it. Jesus owns only one body. He owns only one organization. He does not own any other institution except the church. It is His body.

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; Ephesians 5:25

If anything refutes the invisible church, this is it. Jesus compares Himself and His church to a man and wife. Consequently, if there in an invisible church, then a man has an invisible wife. Jesus does not love an invisible church. He could have chosen another relationship to compare it with. He could have chosen angels because they are invisible to us. He could have used spirits or souls, but He chose to use the visibility of a man and his wife. Jesus is talking about a visible organization which is His church and His body.

Here are several observations in light of these things.

His body is His called-out assembly.

He purchased it with His own blood.

It is His only body.

He loves it dearly.

It is a tragedy how many Christians place outside Christian organizations over their own local church. I have seen it happen all over the country. If Christ feels the way He does about the church, then each one of us should likewise recognize its importance. Many Christians are more offended when their pastor tells the truth about the decay of a parasite organization than they do when a similar organization criticizes or speaks ill of their local church. The New Testament church is the institution He loves, and we are to love it and be an active part of it.

For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. I Corinthians 12:12

A called-out assembly is the same as the church. The church is the same as the body. The body, called-out assembly, or local church has *many members and all members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ*. We do not belong to the body that He purchased just because we are saved, because He purchased the local assembly. What difference does all of this make? It makes a big difference because there are many Christian people who are not a part of a local church. There are Bible colleges where most of the faculty and students are not actively involved in a local church. I am not talking about liberals. I am talking about *fundamentalists*. They believe that the church is not as important as the college.

You are as right with God as you are with the institution for which He died. All over the country there are Christian people who minimize the importance of the church, His body. Hyles-Anderson College has a right to continue to live only as long as it stays under the thumb of the First Baptist Church of Hammond, Indiana.

For by one Spirit are we baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body, is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: and those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. I Corinthians 12:13-23

What does it mean by one spirit? Are we all baptized into one body? He is talking to the church at Corinth, and telling them that the Holy Spirit immersed them into that church.

People like to say that we should go to the church of “our choice.” That is not right. We should go to the church of the Holy Spirit’s choice. The Holy Spirit is supposed to lead us where we go. People choose to

leave churches for the wrong reasons. The Holy Spirit puts us into the body. The ekklesia, or called-out assembly, is His body. He purchased that body with His own blood. The Holy Spirit will show us what body we are to go to and will immerse us into that body.

Each of us has our own place in the body. Each part of the body has a particular function. Each part is important to the overall functioning of the body. No part should look at another part as being of less importance. I cannot say to the PA man, "I have no need of you." I cannot say to the organist and pianist, "I have no need of you." I cannot say to the custodians, "I have no need of you." Each of us has been placed there by God. That means that it is important that we be where God wants us to be. We have need of every single person in the church. Every person in a church needs every other person in a church. God has put us there.

The part of the body which is the weakest is the one that needs our attention the most. If you cut your finger, you will suddenly pay more attention to that finger. In the church we want to cut off the finger. If a member backslides, we cut him off. We treat him as if he were not worthy to be in the body. None of us is worthy to be in the body.

When a part of the body is less attractive to us, we should give the most attention to that part to help make it more attractive. We should not ignore it. We do not need to pamper the part that is working right. We need to pamper the part that is not working right.

That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. 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. Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way. I Corinthians 12:25-31

We have been influenced by this invisible church idea. We need to get back to the fact that the local ekklesia is the called-out assembly, and that all believers have never been a called-out assembly. All believers are not members of the church. If people are going to be reached, it will be through the ministry of local churches.

The military of this country is a good example. When a man joins the army, he does not go visit a camp in North Carolina this week, a camp in Wyoming the next week, and then a camp in Virginia the next week. No. They put him in a working unit, and that unit is a body of soldiers that belongs to the United States Government. It is the body of the army, and the individual fighting unit. If you allowed soldiers to go where they want to go, you would never win a war. Men are placed in a division, in a battalion of that division, in a company of that battalion, in a platoon of that company, and in a squad of that platoon. That is the way you win battles, and that is the way you win wars.

The church is God's institution, for which Christ died. He purchased it to be His body. It is that body to whom He has given the responsibility to take the blessed Book and spread His message to a lost and dying world. That is the way to get the job done by being a part of the local body, called the church, for which He died.

Chapter Eleven

Why Jesus Started Churches and Not a Church

Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.
Ephesians 5:25

But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church. Hebrews 12:22, 23a

There is a very interesting play on words in this passage. There are two different words used, the word *assembly* which in the Greek is the word paneguris, meaning any kind of assembly, and the word *church* which in the Greek is ekklesia, meaning a called-out assembly.

I have made it very clear in previous chapters that the word *church* is the word ekklesia, and that is a called-out assembly. There is no church now other than the local church. Over and over again, in the Bible, it talks about the churches. Jesus did not start a church, He started churches. When He said, *upon this rock I will build my church*, in Matthew 16:18, He was referring to the church at Jerusalem.

There will be a day when all believers will be a church, but not now. All believers have not yet become a called-out assembly. There has never been a time in history when all Christians assembled, consequently there is no way that all believers could be called a church.

Mr. Scofield troubles me when he refers to two churches, but even more when he implies that the local church is not the true church! The true church is the First Baptist Church of Hammond, Indiana, or any local assembly of called-out believers. There will be a day when all believers will become a church. That is when all believers are assembled at the rapture. The word *rapture* simply means a calling out, or a snatching away. When the rapture takes place, all believers will be called out into the air and will become the church.

I want to make an issue about something. We often hear people use the term **the rapture of the church**. There will not be a rapture of the church except when we are all raptured and form a church in the sky. Most often it is used referring to the false idea that all believers already form the church, and that the rapture will be the church that already exists. That is not scriptural.

Ephesians 5 speaks of a glorious church without spot and wrinkle, holy and sanctified. No matter how great a church may be, there is no church that qualifies to be described in this fashion. First Baptist Church in Hammond is not a holy church without a spot or wrinkle. We have some good people, but none of them is perfect. We will not be without spot or wrinkle until we are raptured and receive our glorified bodies. Then we will be like Him, for we will see Him as He is. When it talks about Jesus presenting to Himself a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle, holy and sanctified, it is referring to the time when all believers are called up in the air and given a glorified body. Then we will no longer have sin in our bodies, and we will be just like Jesus. At that time we will be a glorious church, without a spot or wrinkle, holy and sanctified.

For both he that sanctified and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. Hebrews 2:11 & 12

The Bible says there will come a time when all believers will become a church, and in our glorified bodies will come back to the earth. Jesus said, *I will sing in the midst of the church*. Won't it be wonderful to hear Jesus sing? I believe that in the millennium Jesus will take the Lord's supper with us because in the

millennium all believers will be assembled. We will assemble in the sky and become a church, but we will live all over the world, during the millennium. It will not be any problem for us to assemble because we will have glorified bodies.

I was flying over a little town in Idaho. I looked down and saw a little airport. They have a computer in that little airport, and in a matter of seconds they can get the schedule of anybody, on any flight, in the world. I looked down and saw all of the houses. Almost every house down there had a television set and the people could see a picture of something happening on the other side of the world. That is man's technology.

I wonder how it will be when we have our glorified bodies. If Jesus decides to call a church meeting or gathering, all He will need to do is say it, and we will all be there in a matter of seconds. We will come from China, Africa and all over the world in just a matter of a few seconds. All believers will not become a church until that time.

Let me explain the philosophy behind the fact that Jesus has local churches and not one great church of all believers. God wants there to be a wall between us in every single human relationship. There needs to be some kind of a wall between every single human relationship.

Jesus started the local New Testament churches, and each church is autonomous and indigenous. No church has the right to tell another church what to do. The devil's most effective idea is union and unity, and that sounds good. God does not want churches uniting. God is a separation of authority God. God is a state's rights God. One of the saddest things in America is that the Federal Government is taking over things that the states ought to be running. God does not want that.

1. There should be some kind of wall between individuals. Part of that wall should be the person. Somebody said that every man is an island. In a sense, that is true. You are born alone, you live alone, and you die alone. Not many people will totally sympathize with any problems you have.

A husband and wife should have some type of wall between them.

A pastor and people should have some type of wall between them.

Friends should have some type of wall between them.

There ought to be a certain kind of reserve between us and a certain amount of a formality. I call it mystique, and it needs to be in every relationship.

Husbands and wives sometimes do not get along with each other because they know each other too well, and there is no mystique. They have already conquered all there is to conquer. She is no longer intriguing to him. She is no longer a little mysterious to him. There is nothing more in her mind, soul, or heart that he thinks he can pull from her.

I think it is unwise for people to go around the house half naked. I do not believe in a lack of reserve. I am not saying you should wear a tie to dinner in your own home, but I am saying that there should be some walls. I have often said that when Sarah called Abraham Lord, he was not running around the house in his shorts and undershirt. America used to have propriety. Many years ago, the head of the house sat at the table like a king.

In any human relationship each person ought to have an identity. You do not have to be together all the time to be best friends. In fact, if you are together all the time, you will not remain best friends for very long. Many boys were with their girlfriends too much, and then wonder why they broke up. They may have been meant for each other, but they did not get married because they broke down the entire wall between them and there was no mystique left.

In a marriage, each person is still an individual. The wife is still an individual. Someday he may die and she will be left. If they were one, she would die at the same time. He is going to like her better if he lets her retain her identity. Men should not smother their wives. As individuals go their separate ways, they are gathering things which they can share with one another in conversation. She is having things happen to her that he does not know about, and he is doing the same. When they come together, they can talk to each other and share those experiences with one another.

I am not talking about having secrets. I am talking about remaining as separate individuals by retaining some wall of separation. Almost every time I talk to a couple who have had a third party coming into their marriage, it is because the person who's been associated with the third party says that they could talk to each other. The reason some people philander is because they have nothing to talk about at home. The reason they have nothing to talk about at home is because their lives are so attached that they know everything there is to know about each other. Keep a little wall there. I do not care what the human relationship is, there needs to be a little wall between it.

I have seen college kids standing around in the hallways at Hyles-Anderson College groping for something to say. They have already said everything to each other than can be said.

Friendships are the same way. No two people should always be together. If they are, they will eventually lose the mystique in their relationship. It is the mystique, the conquering, the freshness, and the discovering of something new that causes people to enjoy each other's company. Being together most or all of the time takes all of that away.

There is such a break down in our country in the relationship between parents and their children. There ought to be a mild form of worship in a child for their parents, especially for the dad because he is God's deputy in the home. It is good to take boys to ball games, or fishing, but that is not the most important thing about being a dad. We have the idea that we are supposed to be a child's brother or buddy. There is nothing wrong having fun together, but there should remain a certain amount of restraint. A little wall ought to be there.

Do not give all your time to any one person in any relationship. Do not choose one person with whom you spend all of your time.

Jesus started churches, instead of **the** church, in order to have a wall of some kind between us.

2. There should be a wall of dignity between families. A couple should not spend too much time with one other couple. When you break down the wall between you, a bigger wall will be built in its place. Dr. Evans, the president of Hyles- Anderson College and I are good friends, but he has a life to live and I have a life to live. Our paths cross a few times a week. That does not mean that we do not love each other as much as we would if we were together twenty-four hours a day. We probably love each other more than if we were together twenty-four hours a day. Why? Because there are always new things to learn about each other.

A woman who shares with others the intimacy between herself and her husband is being foolish. That is breaking down the wall. Your personal life should be kept personal. The same thing is true about a man laughingly sharing some intimacy between him and his wife to other men. That is betraying something that is holy and sacred. There ought to be walls in the relationships between families.

Nobody should be able to walk inside your house without knocking on the door or ringing the doorbell. Our youngest daughter, Cindy, does not just come to our house and walk in. That is our house. We live there, and we need to keep some walls built. Couples should not buddy with the same couple over and over and over and over again. You should not bare all and you should not be together too much.

Do you know why people smother a friend? Insecurity. They feel threatened if another friend comes between them.

Brother Colsten, who is on our church staff is my friend, but Brother Colsten has other friends and I want that for him. Some men spend so much time together that they have no room for other friends. The same is true for women. Often this leads to putting up gigantic walls in their relationship, as they become too close and begin to lose the delight of the friendship. In every human relationship there should be some kind of wall of dignity, identity and mystique. Without that, there is a danger of the relationship eventually breaking down.

3. There should be a wall between churches. God believes in a delegation of power.

I was on the airplane one day, and beside me sat a very nice man. We started chatting and he told me that he was in the insurance business. At the time he lived in Chicago, but had move there nine months earlier from Salt Lake City. I discovered that he was a Mormon and that his great grandfather had been the fourth

president of the Mormon church. I asked him many questions about his church, and he told me some very interesting things. The Mormon church has no paid pastor or staff on the local level. Although the people tithe, all of the money goes to the main church in Salt Lake City, Utah, and they tell the local congregations what to do. The people have nothing to say about who owns the buildings. The Temple in Salt Lake City owns the building and makes all of the decisions. That means that one man could become a “heretic” and destroy the whole Mormon church.

There is freedom in delegation. If you have ten churches and one goes bad, you still have nine that are good. If you have one universal church and it goes bad, everything goes bad with it. That is what happened to the Roman Catholic church.

That is why Jesus started many churches and not just one church. There is to be a wall between them so that no church has authority over any other church. The same is true about denominations. The same is true about nations. There ought to be a wall.

If two churches spend too much time together, they will get to know each other’s weaknesses. If two people get to know each other too well, they will get to know each other’s weaknesses.

I want to make some general statements.

1. When the wall is broken down, a bigger wall is built. Most people who do not speak to each other were at one time closest friends.

2. A little wall between people, families, couples, and churches keeps our differences from surfacing. Those differences cause other walls to be built that are even bigger than the little wall we have kept between us. If there is no wall of identity between churches, couples, families, individuals, denominations, and nations all competition is gone.

The reason why Hyles-Anderson College is thriving is because it is different. You cannot find another college like it anywhere. We have tried not to attach ourselves too closely to any other group or college. The distinctiveness is what draws people to us. We have our own identity. We do not dip our sails. We do not lower our convictions. We do not change our rules in order to get students. If we decided to break down our walls and become like everybody else, we would not have enough identity to draw students.

Parents send their daughters to Hyles-Anderson College because of what we believe, and because they know we will protect them and not allow them to run around the area without knowing exactly where they are. It is our distinctiveness that draws people, and life is that way. We cannot all be the same. A church cannot be like any other church.

There is no church like First Baptist Church. We are located in the old run-down section of town. Yet people drive many miles to get here because they know they will receive something they cannot find anywhere else. Every church ought to be unique. Every church ought to have its own identity.

3. There is one place where there is no more wall because it was broken down when Jesus died on the cross. You can know God just as well as you want to know Him because you will never know everything about Him. He is always fresh and new. You do not have to be separated from God for God to learn something new He can talk to about you about. That wall has been broken down.

Our daughter, Becky, has lupus. She feels miserable most of the time. I called her one day and I said, “Puddin’, how do you feel?”

She said, “I feel fine.”

I said, “Do not lie to me, tell me how you really feel.”

She said, “Terrible.”

I said, “Does anybody know you feel terrible?”

She said, “No. My boss does not even know I have had any trouble at all.”

I said, "Why?"

She said, "Because I want him to think I can work as much as I have always worked. I tell my family sometimes that I do not feel well, but I do not tell them exactly how I feel, because I do not want them to think that I am complaining all the time."

I said, "For the next few minutes I am going to be quiet, and I want you to cry on my shoulder. Tell me every pain you have had since I talked to you yesterday."

There is a Heavenly Father to Whom we can bare everything in our hearts and lives.

There ought to be an identity between people, between couples, between families, and between churches. Jesus started local churches because the very nature of God is for us not to be bundled, but to be separated. That way we will love each other more.

I was teaching our preacher boys one day on how to get potential out of those who work for them. I taught them that a pastor should allow every member of his staff to excel him one area. Because if they can excel him in one area, it will give him more respect for each person. I may know more about the ministry of First Baptist Church as a whole, but I want each person on my staff to be an expert in one area. Otherwise, I would not respect them as much. I want to see to it that each one of them has an area where he is my superior. I know pastors who have trouble with their assistant pastors because they want to keep binoculars on them all the time.

The same thing is true about a wife. There ought to be an area where she excels. Mrs. Hyles is an artist, and I am not. She is a singer, and I do not sing very well. She excels me in those areas.

Life can be so wonderful if we allow every person in our lives to be an individual. Christianity can be so wonderful when churches are individual churches, each with its own identity. That is why Jesus started churches. This philosophy should spill over into every area of our lives.

Chapter Twelve

The Purpose of Going to Church

Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for the fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.

And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. John 20:19-23, 26

Not many people know the true reason why Jesus started the church. Let me give a couple of things which are not legitimate reasons, even though most people think they are.

1. The church was not started to be a place of worship. You can worship God better alone than you can with others. You can also pray better alone than you can with others. When two people pray together, their prayers will too often be designed to impress each other. Every Christian should worship God *in the beauty of His holiness*. We should adore Him, worship Him, magnify Him, and honor Him. The idea that the church is a place to worship God came from Rome, not from the New Testament. There is only one place in the New Testament where the word worship is connected to a public service, and that deals with worshipping the Devil. There is no example in the entire New Testament of a Christian worship service.

God told the people in Amos 5:21-23, *I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies... I will not accept them... Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs...* The church was not made to be a place of worship.

Jesus did not start the church as a place of evangelism. The evangelistic church is not in the Bible. The soul-winning church is. I am not against people getting saved at church, nor am I against an occasional evangelistic sermon. But, that is not the main purpose of the church, nor was it why the church was started. The New Testament church was a soul-winning institution where all of the members won people to Jesus.

And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ. Acts 5:42

Some people believe that the New Testament church won the lost in the church and in house-to-house soul winning. That is half true. They did go house-to-house soul winning. The temple, however, was not the church, nor did they have church in the temple. The temple was the location of the big gala occasion when they had their feasts and when all of the people would gather in Jerusalem. The temple was also the place where they conducted their daily business. It was like our business district. This was not talking about witnessing in church, but about witnessing in public places as well as in people's homes.

And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word. Acts 8:1, 4

They witnessed everywhere. There was no place they did not go. The jail is part of everywhere. Downtown is part of everywhere. Rest homes are a part of everywhere. Neighborhoods are a part of everywhere. The homes where the poor, the lame, the halt, and the blind live are parts of everywhere. The New Testament church was not an evangelistic church. It was a soul-winning church, and they went everywhere doing so.

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. Mark 16:15

Jesus gave the Great Commission on several occasions. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Acts all give different phrasings of the Great Commission. That does not mean that Jesus spoke it only one time, and that each of them gave it in their own words. They each quoted Jesus. He did not just give it once. One of those times was quoted in Mark. It is not talking about standing behind a pulpit and preaching. It is not directed to a congregation. It is directed to every creature.

An evangelistic church is where a preacher gets up and preaches on salvation. I am not against that, but it is not why the church was started. The evangelism was not to be done at the church. Soul winning was to be done where the people were.

Paul said, *For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.* Some preachers take that as a mandate to preach on nothing except Jesus. That is not true. Paul wrote Timothy and said, *Preach the word*, but he said something else. He said to *exhort*. He said to *rebuke*. Sometimes the preacher is to preach the Word. Sometimes he is to be lovingly stern and rebuke. Sometimes he is to give advice, or exhort. God wants more than just the plan of salvation preached in the church.

Jesus said in Matthew to *teach all nations*. That word in Matthew is the Greek word “ethos” which means ethnics or racess. Mark 16:15 says, to go into all the world. The word “kosmos” is the word arrangement. When Jesus started the church, he started a soul-winning church. Soul-winning was not the purpose of the church, it was the fruit of the church and the result of the church.

In the first century the local churches were soul-winning churches. They were scattered abroad everywhere with everybody preaching or soul winning. Peter did not preach the evangelistic sermon on Pentecost as many think. The Bible says that every nation under Heaven was represented at Pentecost and every man heard the Gospel. Many people were doing the soul winning. It was not just Peter. I am not against having an evangelistic service, but that was not why Jesus started the church, nor was it the way the New Testament church operated.

In the first century, our churches were soul-winning churches. The people came to church for the real purpose of the church. Then they went out from the church and won folks to Christ in the public places and neighborhoods and brought them back to church. Something happened shortly after the early church. The churches became evangelistic rather than soul winning. What is the difference?

A soul-winning church is where the people go out and win them and bring them back in to make a public profession.

An evangelistic church is where you invite sinners to come and the preacher tries to get them saved through his preaching. There is nothing wrong with that except the people go unfed.

For 1900 years the soul-winning church was lost.

In our generation the soul-winning church has been rediscovered. The First Baptist Church of Hammond has had a big part in that. All across America preachers are baptizing more converts than Spurgeon did. I am not nearly the preacher Spurgeon was, but First Baptist Church is a better church than Spurgeon had because we discovered the soul-winning church instead of the evangelistic church.

Evangelists have been forced to change their ministries.

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: Ephesians 4:11,12

The word perfecting means maturing. God gave apostles for the maturing of the saints. God gave evangelists for the maturing of the saints. God gave pastors and teachers for the maturing of the saints. All these were given **for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry**. Every saint is commanded to do the work of the ministry. Every Christian is commanded to be a soul-winner. It is the evangelist's job to mature the Christians so they will better do the work of the ministry.

For many years evangelists were men who traveled across the country and preached revival meetings. These were actually evangelistic crusades, and they basically preached on salvation. I believe that God raised them up, but I do not believe that God had this in mind for the New Testament church. Evangelists were given for the perfecting or maturing of the saints, so the saints could do the work of the ministry. Nobody in the New Testament went around preaching to great crowds of people in churches just to get people saved. They taught, exhorted, rebuked, and perfected them so that the saints could do the work of the ministry.

I am not against the evangelists who went into churches and preached on Heaven, Hell, salvation, the great white throne judgement, etc. Thank God for them, but they had to do it because churches were not doing the job of soul winning. God raised up these evangelists to go to churches and get people saved.

In our day, the evangelist is a preacher who does more of what the Bible says he is to do, the perfecting of the saints. We have lived in the age of the rediscovery of the soul-winning church.

Let us now look at the reasons for the starting of the church.

1. The church was started for comfort.

Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and said unto them, Peace be unto you. John 20:19

These people went to church because they were scared. That is one reason Jesus started the church. It was the place they could receive comfort in the midst of persecution.

Jesus met in the upper room the night that he was betrayed. (John 13 & 14) From there He went to the garden of Gethsemane where he was betrayed that night. It was on Wednesday that our Lord was crucified, so the church meets on Wednesday. Sunday was the day that our Lord rose from the dead, so the church meets on Sunday.

It had to be a church that met in the upper room because they had the Lord's Supper, which was given by a local church. It was also in the upper room that they met when He rose from the dead. (John 20:19 & 26) Consequently, they came to church for comfort. Our Saviour met with the apostles and said: *Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.* He was comforting them.

The church is a place to dispel the fears of the people. When somebody comes with an incurable disease, the church is supposed to help him dispel his fear. When people have a fear of financial reversal, the church is to help dispel their fear. The reason they assembled in the upper room was for fear of the Jews. Coming together gave them more courage and strength than being alone.

2. It is a place for encouragement. Often people will not come to church because they have problems

or because they are discouraged. That is why the church was started. That is why we are supposed to come. When you want to be alone is usually when you do not need to be alone. That is the time we most need to be in church.

Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. Hebrews 10:25

That means we are not to forsake the *churching* of ourselves together. It is especially true as we see the second coming of Jesus Christ coming closer. Why? Because there is a certain element of fear coming. You come to church to be comforted in the fact that we are all going up together. When we come to church we get encouraged.

For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts? James 2:2-4

There is one place in this world where a poor child can go and be just as important as the children of the Pastor, the deacons or the Sunday school teachers. The church is a place of encouragement for those who are looked down upon or despised in this world.

3. It is a place to give tithes to God.

Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in the store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gathering when I come. I Corinthians 16:1

They tithed on the first day of the week, which is when they went to church. Sundays we are to bring our tithes and offerings to the church as well. The tithe or tenth is the smallest portion given in the Bible. Consequently, we go to church to give.

4. It is a place for maturing.

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: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: Ephesians 4:11-15

The body of Christ is the local New Testament church. He owns it. God has given us the church, so that every time someone tries to deceive us with a false doctrine, we will not fall prey to the error. God has given us the church in order for us to become mature. He wants us to grow up. That is what it is all about. We are to come to church to mature. We will never outgrow the church. The church is there to help us to grow up. The preacher is there to help us grow up. The evangelist is there to help us to grow up. The quickest way to be deceived by false doctrines is to become unfaithful to church.

5. It is a place for inspiration to so soul winning.

And when they were assembled with the elders...

Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All powers is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: Matthew 28:12, 16-20a

The church is to inspire and instill in us the importance of going soul winning. Most people will never walk inside the church, but we can go to them. Most people where we work will never walk inside our church, but we can take the message where they are. As a pastor, I am to inspire everybody to go soul winning. Four thousand people go soul winning from First Baptist Church every week. I am not satisfied with that. I want everybody to go soul winning every week. It is not the preacher's job to preach the unsaved down the aisle. It is the preacher's job to preach and inspire the individual Christians to go soul winning. That is God's plan.

6. It is a place for fellowship, to take the Lord's supper; to learn the Bible and to learn how to pray.

Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day they were added to them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Acts 2:41, 42

The word *fellowship* means communion. It is not referring to the typical fellowship of the church. It is referring to a communing in Christ with one another. It is a place where we share a "God Bless You" and "I am praying for you" as we unite in the work of God. It is a place for the breaking of bread in the Lord's Supper as we remember together the price Jesus paid for us on Calvary.

These are the real reasons for the church. When we get away from these, the church fails to do that which we were called by the Savior to do, and we look to church to be something different than what God ordained it to be.

Chapter Thirteen

The History of the Church

And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgement of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication. And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration. Revelation 17:1-6

The church was started some time during the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ. It was not started on Pentecost. They added to the church on Pentecost, but the church already existed. The church was probably started in Matthew chapter ten when Jesus called his disciples to a mountainside and named them as His disciples. For the first time there was a called-out assembly. It is very plain in the New Testament that the church started by Jesus had several characteristics.

1. It was independent. Each church was independent of every other church.

2. There were only two offices in that church – pastor and deacons. Those are the only two offices mentioned in the entire Bible concerning the church. There are three titles given for pastors – **(1) Pastor, (2) Elder, and (3) Bishop** – but the only two offices mentioned in the Bible for the church are for the offices of pastor and deacons.

3. There were two ordinances in this church – baptism and the Lord’s Supper.

4. These churches believed in the doctrine of the local church. For the first 300 years, maybe even the first 700 years of the church, there was no such doctrine as the invisible or universal church. It was a doctrine that came from Catholicism (the word Catholic meaning universal). The doctrine of the universal, or invisible church mentioned in the Scofield Bible, had not been thought of for the first several centuries of the church. The independence of the local church body and the doctrine of the local church were maintained until about the third century.

5. Around the third century big city churches came on the scene and became prevalent. These churches hired men to start churches. The churches united and hired men to be like missionaries and go about starting churches. For example, there are many churches in or near Ephesus, Colosse and Galatia which were started by men who were hired by the churches for that very reason.

6. As these men began to get some authority, they became the bosses of the churches. When I was a Southern Baptist many years ago, they had what were called district missionaries. These district missionaries did exactly what these men did in the third century. They went out and started churches in little towns, rural areas, and city neighborhoods which had no churches. They held their positions for so long that if a church wanted a pastor, they would contact these men to recommend a pastor. These district missionaries soon began

practically assigning pastors to churches.

When the churches had problems, they would call these district missionaries to help them solve the problems. Gradually these men became in charge of groups of churches. In the Southern Baptist Convention, the men who were called district missionaries years ago are now called district superintendents. There is a big difference between a superintendent and a missionary.

The same thing happened in the third century. Churches got together and hired people to work for them. Eventually these men gained more authority and more influence until finally the churches worked for the people. This is what is called an *episcopalian* form of government. It increased until some areas had bishops over them. These bishops had somebody over them called the archbishop, and by the seventh century it had evolved into the Papacy.

7. The Papacy came on the scene as a result of the churches hiring people to start churches. There has never been an office higher than that of the pastor. It is nobody's business outside of the First Baptist Church of Hammond what goes on in the church. The Southern Baptists should be ashamed of themselves. There should not be such a title as a district superintendent. A church can supervise itself. It does not need a denominational "big shot" to tell it what to do from the outside.

8. The true churches retained their independence. These churches were persecuted unbelievably by the Papacy. They were persecuted from the first century, but even in the seventh century, incredible persecution came to the churches that would not submit to the control of these bosses. The churches that refused to be a part of the Bishopry continued to operate with a pastor and deacons, with the two ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, and with the doctrine of the independence of the local church, not the invisible or universal church.

9. There were now two groups or categories calling themselves churches.

1. The Papacy with the Pope and his Archbishops and Bishops strangling the churches.

2. Independent churches who would not do what the Bishop said. The line of the New Testament churches kept going through them. There always has been and there always will be churches in this world which believe in the autonomy of the local church; with a pastor and deacons, baptism and the Lord's Supper, and the doctrine of the local church rather than the invisible universal church.

10. The true churches fled to valleys.

11. These churches were called the Valenses by the pope and the Catholic church because they dwelt mainly in the valleys because of intense persecution against them. The name was changed to Waldenses because a man named Peter Waldo was given credit by the Catholic church for starting these independent churches. The Catholic church would like to claim that Baptist churches started after the Catholic church started. That is not true. The Baptist church goes all the way back to Jesus when he said *upon this rock I will build my church*. The Catholic church doctrine goes back to Nimrod in Genesis 10, but it was not put into practice for hundreds of years.

12. The Catholics changed four basic things.

(1) They changed the doctrines of the church.

(2) They changed the positions of the church.

(3) They changed the ordinances. Baptism was no longer a sign of salvation, but it preceded salvation. Then they changed it from immersion to sprinkling. They changed the Lord's Supper from being a memorial supper to being a sacrament necessary to salvation.

(4) They changed the doctrine of church independence. They taught that there was one big church and that one man should control it. Consequently, the doctrine of the universal church became very prevalent. The doctrine of the universal church, which Mr. Scofield teaches, was started by the Catholics. I will explain later how he got it from the Catholics.

There was a group of people preaching salvation by grace through faith. They were baptizing converts, observing the Lord's Supper properly, they had pastors and deacons, and they believed in the doctrine of the local, independent church, not the universal church. Then there was the Roman Catholic church, or the universal church, with the ordinances, the church officers, and the doctrine changed.

13. Then came the Reformation with Martin Luther and others. During the Reformation many people pulled out of the Catholic church. Some of these people did not intend to pull out, they just intended to rebel within the church, like people today who are trying to clean up the Southern Baptist and the American Baptist conventions from within. From the Reformation a group of churches came out of the Catholic church. Revelation 17 and 18 refers to the Catholic church as a harlot. The Roman Catholic church is also called the mother of harlots. Now, if you are a mother of harlots, you must have some children who are harlots.

Who are these harlots? A child comes out of the body of its mother. Out of the body of Roman Catholicism came the Methodists, the Presbyterians, the Lutherans, etc. All of the reformed theologians and churches that came out of the Reformation came from Roman Catholicism. When you come from the body of a woman, she is your mother. Reformation brought forth little harlots.

14. When these reformationists pulled out, they did not pull out in every way, therefore the Protestants inherited some of the characteristics of their mother, the Catholic church. They pulled out concerning justification by faith, but they did not pull out concerning **formal services**. Go to a Presbyterian church on a Sunday morning and you will get about the same thing you would get from a Roman Catholic service. It is not exactly the same, but it is nearly as formal. The children rebelled concerning some doctrines, but not in the area of formal worship services.

They did not rebel concerning the **unscriptural organization**. The Catholic church assigns a priest to a church. The church does not choose its own priest. The Methodist church does the same thing. They send the preacher they want a church to have. The church does not have total choice in the matter. A Baptist church chooses its own preacher because we still believe in local congregational government. These Reformation Protestants inherited formal services and unscriptural organization from the Catholic church. They also continued to believe in the **doctrine of the universal church**.

15. Eventually, the Protestants had their own Reformation. From each of these Protestant denominations, there came other denominations that rebelled against them.

16. Each of these new Protestant groups eventually had its own Reformation.

17. From these groups came other denominations until there were many different denominations. Each of the groups that rebelled were good, but none of them had anything to do with the true church. Every group of people on the face of the earth that calls itself Christian came either from Roman Catholicism or from Jesus Christ. The Bible of Roman Catholicism as well as all of the Bibles being interpreted today are coming from the Roman Catholic manuscripts, the Wescott and Hort, whereas the King James Bible is the one that

came from the Textus Receptus, which are the non Catholic manuscripts.

I am not implying that these groups were all bad. I am merely pointing out the fact that they came out of the mother. When a group comes out of Roman Catholicism they are her children and she is the mother of harlots.

18. The harlots had children which are the inter-denominational, fundamental people. I am not against these groups. I am simply showing you that these groups do not have New Testament church origins, because they came from the mother of harlots. They may be good kids. They may be good grandkids, but they still came from the mother of harlots. Notice what they did not change when they came out.

They kept their **formalism**, just like their mother or grandmother.

They kept their **high church worship**.

They kept their **high church organization**. They did not have just pastors and deacons like the church at Philippi. They openly organized the church and often took the power away from the pulpit making the pastor a puppet.

19. All during this time the New Testament churches continued. The New Testament church was just moving right along. Should it be unusual then for Baptists to have a loyalty to their name? Should we not have a church spirit and pride? I thank God that I am an American. I thank God that I live in Indiana. I thank God that I live in Hammond, and I thank God that I am a Baptist. That does not mean I hate those who are not Baptists. I simply do not believe that they belong to true New Testament churches.

20. Now the grandchildren are beginning to go back to the harlot. There is the Catholic church, there are Protestant churches, and now we have the inter-denominational movement. Institutions that are inter-denominational used to fight Roman Catholicism, but now many of them are beginning to snuggle up to their mother and grandmother.

The harlots have been going back to the mother all along. Lutherans are uniting with Catholics. Presbyterians are going back to Catholics. Methodists are going back to the ways of Catholicism. The harlots are going back to the mother, but now the grandchildren are also going back to the harlots.

Any organization started outside of a New Testament church weakens with every generation. Some of our fundamental colleges are allowing things now that they would not have allowed years ago. I picked up my newspaper one morning and looked at the basketball scores. I saw the score given for one of our former *fundamental* school's girls' basketball team. A Christian college should not have their girls in shorts running around a gymnasium while a bunch of people watch them play basketball. Under that was the score of another fundamental college that was founded just one year before Hyles-Anderson. Young ladies are supposed to dress modestly and cover their thighs in public. Why are these institutions deteriorating? Because they are going back to the harlots and the harlots are going back to the mother.

I picked up a newspaper in Minnesota and read an article about the Lutherans and Catholics making an alliance. That is the harlots going back to mother. Most "Christian" television and radio stations are operated mostly by money from the harlots. They are the children of Catholicism. That is why they have Catholic priests on a so-called Christian television station. They are going back because they are operating outside the canopy of God's promise of divine perpetuity.

The best way to avoid the ecumenical trap is to stay with the local independent Baptist church. Stay with the First Baptist Church of Hammond, and I guarantee you that you will never get involved in ecumenicalism in this generation. I have talked to preachers all across this country who have their hands tied. The AWANAS have gone to other Bibles besides the King James. Their churches are splitting because the people are more loyal to the AWANAS than they are to the local church. AWANAS is carrying them back to the harlots, and the harlots are carrying them back to the mother.

Somebody has to tell this. If we do not tell people that these things are gone, they will stay hooked up

with them and be swept into the ecumenical movement by some organization they did not know was going back to the mother. There are still some good grandchildren. There are still some good inter-denominational people. Because they do not belong to the New Testament churches, and they do not have the promise of divine perpetuity, they are going to die. What is the safest thing to do about these good grandchildren? Let me give you several things.

1. Accept them as brothers and sisters in Christ.

2. Thank God for the good they do.

3. Accept them as dear friends.

Accept them as dear friends, but do not join up with them organizationally. If you do, they will eventually pull you into the ecumenical movement. You will probably see the day in your generation when the only non-ecumenical people in this world will be independent Baptists. God has promised us divine perpetuity.

Who is preaching on standards today? Nazarenes? No. Church of God? No. Southern Baptists? No. Who is preaching against mixed swimming? Who is preaching on men getting haircuts? Who is preaching that women ought to wear modest clothing? Who is taking a stand against social drinking? Who still takes a stand on standards? A few independent Baptists and that is just about all.

Who is left that believes this Bible? Who is the King James Bible has been preserved word for word? Who is left? The Church of God? No. Nazarenes? No. Children of God? No. American Baptists? No. Southern Baptists? No. Inter-denominational Bible Institutes? No. Inter-denominational Bible colleges? No. Who is left? A few independent Baptists. That is all.

It is not getting very popular to be an independent Baptist. It was not very popular in the seventh century either when they fled to the valley.

Who is still for soul winning? A few independent Baptists.

Who still believes in the doctrine of the local church and not in the doctrine of the universal church? A few independent Baptist people. That is all. We do not have a mother or grandmother to go back to. We have a Saviour Who started our church. We can trace our history very quickly. It is the New Testament church which was started by Jesus in the book of Matthew.

Thank God that my mama and daddy moved two doors away from a Baptist church. My mama was a Methodist until she was forty. Mama was baptized in a Baptist church after she was forty years old. Thank God that we did not have a car and could attend anywhere but that Baptist church. Thank God that I became a preacher in the church that descended from Jesus Christ.

Chapter Fourteen

The Price for the Church

And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church. And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews: And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house. Acts 20:17-20.

For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Take heed therefore unto yourself, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. Acts 20:27, 28

The word *purchased* means the right price applied to the right place. If I wrote a check to pay for a debt, but failed to send that check in to the whom I owed, would my debt be paid? No, I still owe the debt. A debt must not only be the proper price, it must also be paid to the proper place. The price for the church is God's blood, but the blood must be paid to the proper place. Let me show you what the proper place is.

Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. Hebrews 9:12

In the Old Testament, the High Priest killed two goats on the Day of Atonement. The blood of one goat was taken by the High Priest into the Holy Place to the Ark of the Covenant. On the top of the Ark of the Covenant was the Mercy Seat. Over that Mercy Seat were two cherubims beaten out of pure gold. Between the wings of those cherubims was the Glory of God. The blood from the goat that was sacrificed was applied to the proper place which was the Mercy Seat. If the blood did not get to the Mercy Seat, then it was the proper price, but not paid to the proper place. It would have been no more valid than that check written but not paid to the creditor.

If the blood of Jesus was left on the ground at the cross, that means it did not get to the Holy Place and is not valid. "What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus." It is not just the blood shed, but also the blood applied.

God told Moses to instruct the people to apply the blood of the lamb at Passover. When He passed over and saw the blood of that lamb, He would withhold His judgement. God did not judge them based on His omniscience. He made a point of letting them know that He would not judge them only when He saw the blood. It was not enough that the blood was shed. The blood had to be properly applied.

How could God see the blood in the tabernacle? His glory was in the Holy Place, and the blood had to be taken inside the Holy Place and sprinkled on that Mercy Seat. That was the right place to take the right price. If the right price was paid on the altar in the courtyard, but left there, it would have been the right price, but the wrong place. If the blood Jesus shed on Calvary was not applied in Heaven, it was the right price in the wrong place and it cannot save anybody.

Jesus did more than just shed His blood for the church. He purchased the church with his own blood. To purchase it, He had to take the right price to the right place.

And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. Hebrews 12:24

It does not say that it is the shedding of blood that saves. It is the shed blood sprinkled that saves. When Cain had killed Abel God said:

...What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. Genesis 4:10

God can hear blood speak. The voice of Abel's blood cries to God from the ground. Blood can speak a language God can hear.

Thirty years after the blood had been shed, *it still speaketh*. Two thousand years after Calvary *it still speaketh*. From where does it speak? It has to speak to God, so there is a heavenly Mercy Seat just as there was an earthly Mercy Seat; Jesus, the High Priest, took His own blood to that heavenly Mercy Seat, otherwise it would not have been acceptable. It would have been the right price, but the wrong place. The blood had to get from the altar to the Mercy Seat.

The blood of Jesus had to be shed; otherwise He could have died without the inflicting of the wounds. Jesus went up to Heaven and sprinkled His own blood on the Mercy Seat. Right now that blood is talking. It is saying not to charge our sins to us because we have been purchased by that blood.

Cain's blood indicted him for killing his brother Abel. God's blood *speaketh better things than that of Abel*. God looks down, sees my sins, and starts to charge them against my record, but the blood starts talking. The blood says, "I have already paid for that sin." The Bible says that God will not impute or write down my sin against me because the blood is speaking. The blood is my canceled check, and that check speaks that the debt has been paid. There is nothing God the Father can do about my sins because Jesus has the canceled check there on the Mercy Seat. That is the price He paid for the church.

Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ... I Peter 1:2

This does not refer to the elect according to the shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ, but to the sprinkling of that blood applied to the proper place. Jesus did die and pay the price, but paying the price and getting the price to the right place are two entirely different things. If on the Passover, the blood of that innocent lamb was left in the back yard where the lamb was killed and not properly applied, the firstborn of the family would have been killed. It was not the blood shed back in the back yard that spared the life of that firstborn; it was that blood applied at the front door. It was not the blood shed on the altar that satisfied God; it was the blood applied in the Holy of Holies. It was not the blood shed on the cross that saves; it was that blood applied in Heaven.

When Jesus was resurrected, and Mary Magdalene saw him, Jesus said, *Touch me Not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father*. He was the High Priest. He was taking the blood He had shed as the Lamb of God to the Mercy Seat in Heaven, to sprinkle it there. Between the time the High Priest took the blood in the basin and sprinkled it on the Mercy Seat, nobody could touch Him. That is why He told Mary Magdalene not to touch Him.

Later He told Thomas to put his hands into His side. Why could Thomas touch Him when Mary Magdalene could not? Because when Thomas saw Him, He had already been to Heaven, sprinkled the blood, and the blood was already talking to the Father.

Jesus died for the church and purchased it with His own blood. The local church is composed of born-again people, who have been scripturally baptized, and have joined a certain assembly.

The Jews were going to the promised land. When they got there, they were going to build a permanent temple. On the way, all they had was a tabernacle, a tent. It was a portable place of worship. Jesus has bought us a home in Heaven, but we are not there yet. So He has also bought us a portable Heaven, which is called the church. He bought me a home in Heaven with his blood, and He bought me a home on earth while I am going to Heaven. He purchased it with the most precious and expensive thing, God's own blood. He not only bought

my soul, my spirit, my body, a home in Heaven, but He also purchased the church with His own blood.

Chapter Fifteen

The Five Churches

When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,) He left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee. And he must needs go through Samaria. Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.

The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water? Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle? John 4:1-7, 11, 12

It is amazing that even after seventeen hundred years Jacob's well was still giving water. Occasionally, somewhere out in the woods, somebody will discover an old well which is over a hundred years old, but it is no longer giving any water. This lady in Sychar came to Jacob's well, and it was still giving water to drink after seventeen hundred years.

In verse twelve she says, *...Art thou greater than our father, Jacob, which gave us the well...?* That statement leads me to believe that when Jacob dug that well he had in mind more than just the people who were alive at that time. Seventeen hundred years later there was still water being drawn from that well. For fifty-one generations that well kept on giving water.

When I was a young man there was a famous *fundamental* preacher in America who had the largest Sunday school in the United States. He was probably the most famous *fundamental* independent preacher of his day, and maybe in the history of our nation. When he passed away, his church made the mistake of not calling the right person to pastor. The church went from over 3,000 in Sunday school to about 200. Finally, the church sold its buildings and the few remaining people scattered to other churches. That church is now only history. It was at one time the outstanding soul-winning church of this generation.

There was another church that at one time had the largest Sunday school in America. The pastor died suddenly of a heart attack. The church was not prepared. They did not know the correct way to find a pastor. They once had about 6,000 in Sunday school, but now they have only about 1200 who still attend.

Not too many years ago, the pastor of what was at that time the largest in America resigned. Seven wealthy men took charge of the church and decided that they did not want the same type of pastor as before. They wanted more of a Bible student and less of a hell-fire and brimstone preacher. Those seven wealthy men controlled that church until it was only a shadow of what it once had been.

I have a desire for the First Baptist Church of Hammond to be the same one hundred years from now as it is today. If God will give me grace, I am going to see to it that it is prepared, not only for my death, but for the death of the good people who are there now.

For many years the First Baptist Church has been a well flowing to an entire nation. With all my heart I have tried to do more than just to have a wonderful ministry while I am alive. I have tried to see to it that the well would continue to run long after I am gone. I realize that if First Baptist Church were to die its work would never stop. Hundreds and thousands of preacher boys, missionaries, and converts all over the world are spreading the Gospel of Christ and building great churches, but, I want it to still be doing the same thing a hundred years from now as it is doing now.

Most of the great churches of the last generation are no longer useful to God. Most of them are liberal in their theology and are not busy reaching the lost world as they once did. I am convinced that the reason for this is that the pastor who built it to its greatest days failed to prepare the people for the next generation.

Abraham was a well-digger. There are three main wells that Abraham dug.

1. The well of **Rehoboth**, meaning fruitfulness or enlarging.
2. The well of **Beer-lahai roi**, meaning the power and vision of God.
3. The well of **Beer-sheba**, meaning the Word of God.

The Philistines came and stopped up those wells. The Philistines of our day will do everything they can to see to it that the church does not continue to be useful.

Isaac came along and redug those three wells that had been stopped up by the Philistines. It would certainly be a wonderful thing if the Paul Rader Tabernacle in Chicago could once again be what it used to be for God. It would be a wonderful thing if Moody Church in Chicago started running buses all over Chicago and bringing poor people to church. It would be a wonderful thing if Spurgeon's Tabernacle could once again flow with living water. But rather than unstopping the wells that have been stopped up, would it not be even better if we kept the Philistines from stopping up the wells we have flowing now?

There are five different types of churches that a church can become.

1. The New Testament church. This is our aim. Tragically, many great New Testament churches do not remain as such and eventually deteriorate to being like one of these remaining four.

2. The state church.

So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. Revelation 17:3

And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her. Revelation 17:7

And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth. Revelation 17:18

In these three verses we find something in common. Each tells us that in the end time, there is going to be a state church and a church state. The harlot, (the National and World Council of Churches) is going to yoke up with the United Nations. That union of nations and union of churches will unite and become a state church.

There is more to it than just the separation of church and state. There are two kingdoms involved. There is the kingdom of Heaven and the kingdoms of this world. The kingdoms of this world have no business operating the kingdom of God. **It is more than the church not interfering with the state. It is also the state not interfering with the church.**

All across America, the voices that once warned us of state accreditation for our schools are passing off the scene. There are very few men with a national voice today who have the courage to say anything about it anymore. We must not allow our schools to succumb to accreditation. God does not need the devil's approval to run His business. Superiority does not need the approval of inferiority.

Several years ago, the state of Indiana wrote to inform us that the laws of our state require that every college be accredited by either an accrediting association or the State Board of Education. We threw it away, so they sent us a second letter. We threw it away as well. Every drop of blood in my body will spill out before I will allow the state to tell Hyles-Anderson College how to operate.

There was a day we had many voices around the country telling us not to be accredited. There was a day when *fundamental* colleges told the state that they will not tell us how to operate. It is not the state's business what we teach in our college. It is not the state's business who teaches in our college. There is not one place in the Bible that gives the government the right to run the church. There are two different kingdoms, and neither has the right to run the other.

The next thing they try to get us to do is to appoint our own accrediting board. They will allow that board instead to be the policing force for our schools, so we begin to police each other. It is **nobody's** business what goes on in the church. These are two things wrong which must be said about that.

(1) The local church is the final authority about what goes on in the local church.

(2) It takes away our freedom. I do not want to lose my freedom to a liberal or a fundamentalist.

We form a system and as it deteriorates, we choose other men to replace the men now on the board of the accrediting association. Some of the greatest colleges of a generation ago have gone liberal because they allowed someone else to have control. Many parents want their child's education to be accredited. Why would any Christian parent want the school that teaches their child to be accredited by unsaved people, who are for abortion, for the gay rights ordinances, and for handing out birth control to kids in the schools? The state wants to be your god. We must warn the people in our churches of the danger, so that the next generation will know to stand against allowing it to happen to them. We must protect the well from being shut down when we are gone.

3. The denominational church. We need independent churches to be able to fellowship and to cooperate with each other without becoming denominations, which will eventually seek to have control over each other. There is a new movement in America of independent, soul-winning, sin hating and Christ-honoring churches. It would be destructive if we decided to go out and start a new denomination. A church should stand with everybody who stands for right, and against everybody who stands for wrong, but it should not take the church into anything. **Keep it independent.**

I have many dear preacher friends across the country who are like-minded in their beliefs. I want us to be able to enjoy our fellowship without the constraints of becoming denominational. We do not try to meddle with their affairs. We do not try to tell them what to do. We do not send them their Sunday school literature, and if they do not take our literature, we do not black-list them. There is a pure, sweet, cooperative fellowship without any union, or without any organization.

That is the way the church should be and it is the way to keep it alive for many more years. We have the idea there is strength in a movement. There is not strength in a movement, and there is not strength in union. There is strength in unity, volunteer unity.

4. The invisible, universal church. In an earlier chapter I mentioned the three groups in *fundamentalism*. I love group number one. I have preached in their churches throughout the years, but do not call one of them to be the pastor of a church in group number three. I love group number two, but we should not call a group number preacher to pastor a group three church.

One of the greatest preachers who ever lived in this nation resigned his church a few years ago. His church called a good man, but one who was a member of group number one. They called a formal pastor to pastor an informal church. They called a non-aggressive pastor to pastor an aggressive church. They called a so-called deeper-life pastor to pastor a hell-fire and brimstone church. His philosophy did not fit in group

number three. That is what damages many of the once great churches and destroys their greatness.

When I went to First Baptist Church of Hammond, the pastor of a large, famous Chicago church called and asked me to meet him for lunch. We had lunch together one day, and he said, "Dr. Hyles, I want to have in Chicago what you have in Hammond. Tell me how I can do it."

I said, "Change your Sunday morning music. Fire your committees. Have a representative church government. Take the people who are on the committees and send them out on bus routes."

He did not want to hear those things. What he was really asking me was how to do what we were doing without doing what we were doing. You cannot do it. When D.L. Moody was in Chicago, that is not what he did. He had wagons and horses all over the Chicago area that were used in reaching people for Christ.

Do not allow the universal, invisible church people to take over the church. One of our young men attended a group number one college. He was a fine young man from one of our finest church families. I was talking to him one day about school, and I asked him where he was going to church.

He said, "I go to the college church."

I said, "Do you have people saved there?"

He said, "I don't know."

I said, "Why do you not know?"

He said, "Whenever somebody comes forward, they always take them into another room to deal with them. We never hear if they were saved."

They are not the same as we are. When a sinner is saved, I want to rejoice for a while. They are good men, but they will not mix well in a church like First Baptist.

I do not believe a new convert should go before a church committee to allow them to decide whether or not he can be baptized. That is what they did when I first went to Hammond. Once a month they had a meeting with the new converts. One Sunday night we had a meeting ninety-one converts were there! They could not all get in the room. They were lined up down the hallway. The chairman of the "judgement" committee walked over and said, "What are we going to do?"

I said, "Let's get some bigger nets, and we will get more fish." If we allow group number one and two to take over the churches, they will take away the soul-winning emphasis. They will become dominated by committees that snuff the life out of the church.

5. The synagogue church.

I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. Revelation 2:9

Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which says they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. Revelation 3:9

A church is not just an assembly. It is a called-out assembly. Called out of what? Called out of the world. If a church is a worldly church, it is a synagogue rather than an ekklesia. A worldly church is not a church. It may be called a church, but it is not a church. They say they are, but they are not. A called-out assembly dresses differently, lives differently, and sings differently. We do not walk the same beat the world walks.

The most dangerous thing churches face is taking a stand only against those sins which are specifically listed in the Bible. I am against sin if the Bible says it is wrong, but the Bible not only lists sins; it also lists principals by which we are to judge what else is wrong. That is not legalism. It is applying Biblical principles to the way we live, and thus avoiding becoming like the world. A church must be careful not to fall for a fancy Bible study that teaches the Bible without emphasizing the importance of specific applications in the way we

are to live.

These are the types of churches that cause great, independent, fundamental, soul-winning churches to lose their greatness and fall from having the influence they once had for the Lord. A church will continue to be like Jacob's well, with living water flowing through it generation after generation, only as long as it avoids becoming like these churches.

We must stay clear of the state.

We must stay clear of denominationalism.

We must stay clear of the invisible, universal church crowd.

We must stay clear of just becoming a synagogue, by losing our convictions and standards.

I love the children in my church. For many of them I am the only pastor they have ever had. Someday, I will be gone, and they will be forced, for the first time in their lives, to find a new pastor. I want them to know what to look for and what to avoid. I want there to be the same kind of church for their children as there was for them. The next generation needs for those of us who believe in the New Testament church to prepare for those who will come after us. We must train others to keep the life in the church, so that the water will still be flowing long after we are gone.

Many great churches have lost their greatness after the first or second generation. It does not have to be that way. A hundred years from now, I hope that the well at First Baptist Church is still flowing.

Jacob did not dig that well just for his own family. When Jacob was digging that well, he probably said, "I am going to make it good. I am going to be sure that my children and my grandchildren can drink from this well." No wonder the woman at Sychar could say, "Jacob dug this well for us."

I hope two hundred years from now some young person can come to First Baptist Church and find an old-fashioned *fundamental* church. I hope he will be able to say, "Many years ago a man named Jack Hyles dug this well for us."

Chapter Sixteen

The World and the Church

These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.

I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou has given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee.

And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. John 17:1-6, 9-11a, 13-17, 21

In this passage, over half of these verses deal with the world. The word *world* is the word kosmos in the Greek and it means the world arrangement. No chapter in all the Bible mentions the church as often as it is mentioned here, yet the word *church* is not actually used at all. The subject of the church, however, is brought up over and over again.

Let me begin by explaining the purpose of the church. Jesus said to the Father, *that the world may believe*. There we find the purpose of the church. The church exists that the world may believe. It is not talking about the whole earth. There are several words for world in the Greek. There is the word world which means dirt or soil. There is the word world which means nations. Here in John the word kosmos is used meaning the world arrangement, or the world system.

It is not referring to the anti-Christ and the end-time world government. It is not referring to Hollywood, Broadway, night clubs, and other worldly things. It is referring to the entire world arrangement, most of which is not bad in and of itself. Jesus described it well when he said, *eating and drinking, buying and selling, and marrying and giving in marriage*. There is nothing wrong with these things. They are simply a part of the world system.

When Jesus said not to love the world, nor the things in the world, He was referring to these types of things in the world's system. He was saying, "love not eating and drinking, love not buying and selling, and love not marrying and giving in marriage." Because of our misunderstanding on this, we totally misunderstand what worldliness is all about. We also misunderstand the role of the church in the world and in our own lives.

There are two kingdoms in this world: the kosmos and God's Kingdom. Everything in this world is a part of the kosmos except the church. Your house is in the *kosmos*. The activities of your daily life are in the *kosmos*. When God calls us out of this world there is no other place to go except the church. The church is the place where we are strictly absorbed in the things of God and not the things of the *kosmos*. Either you are in the world, or you are in the *kosmos*.

In this chapter we are going to learn that God calls us out of the world and then turns around and commands us to go back into the world. Let's look further into this.

He says, **"I want you to come out of the world, to go back into the world. I want you not to love the world, not to be of the world, and then to go back into the world."** God is saying that there are two places we can be. One of those is the *kosmos*, or the world arrangement. That includes buying gasoline, driving a car, shoveling snow, cleaning house, cooking meals, washing clothes, or going to work. All of that is *kosmos*, because it is a part of the world arrangement. None of it is bad.

The place not in the *kosmos* is in the New Testament church. When God calls us out of the world, he is calling us into the church. Most Christians do not even begin to understand the importance of the church. You are not going to grow in grace outside the church. You are not going to be a better Christian outside the church, because you cannot be a better Christian than the *kosmos*.

Let me make something very clear. All of the inter-denominational teaching is *kosmos*. The church is God's kingdom in this world, not in the sense of the Kingdom of God, but as God's empire. When you come out of the *kosmos* you go into the church.

Occasionally somebody will say to me, "I have been staying at home and growing in grace just studying the Bible there."

The home is a wonderful place, but it will not take the place of the church anymore than the church can take the place of the home. **God would not have established the church if the home could have done the same job.** God would not have established the home if the church could have done the same job. The home and the church both have a place in the training of children, but the church is the place you go to when you come out of the *kosmos*.

Jesus then says that we should go back into the *kosmos*. Why? **That the world may believe, and That the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.** The purpose of the church is that the world may know and believe.

We must come out of the world to get strength; to go back into the world, that the world may believe; to come back out of the world to get strength; to go back into the world, that the world may believe; to come back out of the world to get strength; to go back into the world, that the world may believe. God is not calling us out of this world permanently, and God is not calling us to go into this world permanently. He is calling us alternately to go into the world to help the world believe, and then to come back out of the world to get strength to go back into the world again.

It is to be to church, to world, to church, to world, to church, to world, to church, to world. There is no immediate zone. There is no space in between. The only place that is not *kosmos* is the New Testament church. The world is everything but the church. If you are not in church, you are in the world, because there are only two kingdoms. If we do not go to church, we are worldly, because the only place that is not worldly is the church.

And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world. John 17:5, 6a

He is not just referring to the glory he had before there was an earth. The word *world* again is the word *kosmos*. Jesus was referring to a time before man fell in the Garden of Eden, or before the world was arranged like it is now. Man did not work by the sweat of his brow. Woman did not give birth by travail. The earth had no howling wings, no fiery serpents and no wild animals, and the arrangement was not like it is now.

Jesus said, *I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world.* The moment you come to Christ you are commanded to get out of the world. The only way to get out of the world is to get into the church. Christians are to be in church every Sunday morning, every Sunday night, and every Wednesday night. We can remove all of the sinful activities out of our lives, but still be worldly, because we

are not coming out of the world by coming into the church. The church is God's institution. It is either the world or the church. Many Christians do not love sin, but they do love the world because they do not faithfully come out of the world.

That is why people should go to church. That is why people should join the church. That is why people should get baptized. You come out of the world long enough to get strength to go back into the world. We get strength to go to the steel mills and live right while we are there. We get strength not to go to the Christmas parties while they serve liquor. We get strength to go back out in the world and listen to the rock music. We get strength to go out into the world to tell people about the Saviour. A Christian will stop being a soul winner if he stops coming to church. It is at church that we get into the habit of talking about Jesus, so that we can go back into the world and talk about Him to the lost people around us. We sing about Jesus, preach about Jesus, teach about Jesus, and fellowship around Jesus until it is not so hard to go out in the world and talk about Him. Stay out of church for a while, and you will not talk about Jesus in the world. You will begin to get more and more ashamed. That is what church is all about.

The church is not a place where a bunch of people tiptoe in on Sunday morning, with a dignified looking wardrobe, look at three candles burning on the communion table, listen to a choir sing the "Sevenfold Amens," and have a worship experience. That is not the purpose of the church. The church is a place where you can come to hear His name praised, after hearing His name cursed all week, so that you can go back out there and praise His name in the world. The church is the place you come to fellowship with God's people, so that you can have strength enough to go back out and talk about Jesus to the devil's crowd in the *kosmos*.

Every time you stand up and sing, "Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine, oh what a foretaste of glory divine," you are building up a little more strength so you can go back into the *kosmos*.

Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. John 17:7, 8

I wonder where Jesus gave them these words. They had to have assembled in church. Hebrews says that Jesus prayed and sang praises in the church. Where did Jesus talk about this and teach the Word of God? In church. All the cottage prayer meetings in the world will never take the place of church.

A pastor friend of mine went to an inter-denominational seminary to take a course. There he met some theologians who taught him the idea of having little cell groups. He had built his church with Sunday morning, Sunday night and Wednesday night services, but he decided to try dividing his church into these cell groups. As a result, the church body no longer came together, and the church began to go down. No home Bible study will ever take the place of the church. No cottage prayer meeting will take the place of the church, because the church is supposed to assemble.

I pray for the: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. John 17:9-11

Jesus was praying for the church, because He knows that if the church will pray, the *kosmos* will get the message. The average Christian thinks that coming out of the world is when we stop doing sinful things. Coming out of the world is coming to church. It is coming out of the *kosmos*. A Christian college is not a substitute for the church. We take the church so lightly. That is why you should not travel during church time. That is why Christian school teachers ought to be faithful to all of the church services just like everybody else.

And now I come to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in

themselves. I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. John 17:13, 14

They are in the world, but not of the world. They are in the *kosmos*, but not of the *kosmos*. On an airplane flight one day they offered me a glass of wine. I did not drink the wine, so I was in the airplane, but not of the airplane. I was in the *kosmos* but I was not of the *kosmos*.

When you go to work, you are to be in the *kosmos* but not of the *kosmos*. When you go shopping, you are supposed to be in the *kosmos*, but not of the *kosmos*. That is what Jesus meant when He said, And be not conformed to this world: but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. While you are there in the world, you are not supposed to be of it. You are to be transfigured from it.

We are to witness to the world while we are in the world, but we do not need to be like the world in order to witness to the world. In fact, we are commanded not to be like them. The greatest testimony to the world is the testimony of a Christian who has the strength and the courage to be different for the sake of his Saviour. That strength comes from the church. Far too many Christians use the excuse for being like the world as being their method of reaching the world. That is contrary to what we are commanded.

Jesus also said that we would be hated by the world. The most hated church in Hammond, Indiana, is the First Baptist Church. Isn't that strange? The church that the public schools curse the most has the most public school students going there. There are more public school students in First Baptist Church of Hammond than in any liberal church in this city. Why? The *kosmos* knows they do not have the answer. They will not listen to someone who is of them, but they will listen to somebody that is not of them. That is how we reach many of the young people in the public schools. They are looking for answers.

I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from evil.
John 17:15

That is a strange statement. He just finished praying that we would be taken out of the world, yet then He prays that we will not be taken out of the world. We are to come out of the world, but not stay out of the world. Why? To keep us from the evil that is in the world. He was praying that while we are in the world we would be kept from the evil that is in the world. The church is the place we go that is not in the world to get the strength to keep us from that evil which is in the world. God's people will not be kept from the evil of this world, if they do not frequently come out of the world to get that strength.

They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. John 17:16

Jesus does not want us to be of the world any more than He would be of the world. That is why we should not watch soap operas on television. Would Jesus watch soap operas? Then we are not to watch them either. We are to be in this world exactly like Jesus was. Jesus went to church to get strength, so we are to go to church to get strength. He walked among men, but He was not of men.

Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. John 17:17

The word *sanctify* means to set them apart. When we leave the church and go into the *kosmos*, we are to be set apart from the *kosmos*. How can we be set apart from the *kosmos*? Through God's Word. We are sanctified through the Word.

I was on an airplane one day flying to Los Angeles. I had a Bible out and was reading it. A former famous football player came walking down the aisle in the airplane. At that time, he was a wicked football player and Hollywood movie star. He walked back to the washroom and he saw my Bible open. He stopped and stared at it. He turned around and backed up. He had a group of friends with him, so he motioned for them

to come back there. He pointed to my Bible. About a dozen of those guys stared at me and my Bible. I looked up at them and said, “**Jesus!**” He went to the wash room, and the others went back to their seats.

If we read the Word of God, quote the Word of God, carry the Word of God, study the Word of God, and memorize the Word of God, we will be sanctified, or set apart from the world. The world will also help you set yourself aside. We leave the *kosmos* to go to church, go back to the *kosmos* and stay in the Word of God, and the Word of God sanctifies us. We are not of the world because we are of the Word of God while we are in the *kosmos*.

As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. John 17:18

Why did Jesus come to the world? **For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.** Christ Jesus came into the world (*kosmos*) to save sinners. Then why are we in the *kosmos*? To save sinners. Jesus told the Father that we were sent to do the same thing that He was sent to do.

That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. John 17:21

In the final analysis, we go to church that the world may believe.

Unfortunately, so many Christians have been saturated by the inter-denominational teaching that they have no comprehension of the truth concerning the church. Jesus never even considered a Christian not being in church. He purchased the local church with His own blood. The church built for Christians to come to as soon as they got saved.

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose. Romans 8:28

If Jesus is calling us to something, then He also is calling us from something. He is calling us from the world, to the church. I believe that He is telling us we ought to go to church because it will make everything work out fine. But, everything will not work out for the good, if we do not go to church. That may seem strange to many *fundamental* Christians because we have been so indoctrinated by the Scofield Bible and the inter-denominational Bible schools and institutes who have little understanding regarding the local church. Jesus never intended for any Christian to be outside the local church.

The only thing not in the world is the church. Anything outside that church is *kosmos*. You can go anywhere from good *kosmos* to bad *kosmos*. Jesus is calling us from the world to the church.

It is difficult for a Christian who is oriented in any other doctrine than this to get into his subconscious the importance of the church. We have sent our preacher boys to inter-denominational Bible colleges and seminaries that did not teach the autonomy and independence of the local church and they have been brainwashed with the universal invisible church concept, so the local church is not really important to them anymore. It is tragic how many Christians have been affected by this doctrine.

If you do not faithfully attend church, you will go back into the world and eventually you will be of the world. Many Christians go on vacation and think it is fine to miss church on a Wednesday night, or maybe even on Sunday. Or, they stop at something that called itself church, but it is not a church. Many born-again people have played the slot machines in Las Vegas, Nevada, on a vacation, who would never have done so if they had not missed church. That is why people go on vacation, and end up going mixed swimming. If you stay in the *kosmos* too long without coming out of the *kosmos*, which is the church, before you know it, you are in the world and you are of the world.

Chapter Seventeen

Jesus and the Church

When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Matthew 16:13-18

It is amazing how we accept things as true just because we have always heard them taught a certain way. For example, most people have always heard that the church is the body of Christ. We have been taught that Christ is the head of all Christians and that all Christians form His body. The Bible does not mean it in that way. Much of this has come from the Scofield Bible. It is not true, and I am going to show you that in this chapter. If you believe the Bible, you will understand exactly what the church is all about.

1. Jesus is the founder of the church. The church was not founded on Pentecost. The Bible says in Acts 2 that they added to the church those that were saved. You cannot add to something that is not there. I do not know how long the church was there, but it was there before Matthew 18, where it speaks of taking something to the church. Mr. Scofield says that is the future church, but God does not say that. You cannot take something to a future church. You can take something only to a present church.

And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease. Matthew 10:1

Whenever the church was started, it was started with a called-out assembly. The first place in the Bible where I find such a statement is in Matthew 10:1. I feel the church was started here or before here. I know it was started some time in the personal ministry of Jesus Christ.

2. Jesus is the foundation of the church.

And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Matthew 16:18

The rock he was speaking about was not the pope. The church was not built on the Pope. The church was built on the foundation of Jesus. Jesus was the rock being referred to, not Peter. The word *Peter* means little pebble. The word *rock* means a strong, big rock. They are not the same word. Peter was a little pebble, but the rock is Jesus.

3. Jesus is its builder.

He said, *upon this rock I will build my church*. Our job is not church growth. Our job is soul winning. Jesus said that He would build the church. Jesus is in the church-building. He never told us to build a church. He told us to go soul-winning, and He would do the building of His church. We are witnesses. He never told us to go into all the world and build churches. Our job is to obey the Great Commission and His job is to build

the church.

4. Jesus attended it, and sang and preached in it.

But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. Hebrews 2:9-12

We see here that Jesus went to church. He was quoting from an Old Testament prophesy by saying that He would declare God's name in the *church*. Luke 4 says that it was Jesus custom to go to the synagogue on the Sabbath Day. He was in a habit of going. When He went to the cross all the things attached to the synagogue were nailed to the cross with Him. In the place of the synagogue He gave us the local church.

Jesus preached in the church. I am not talking necessarily about a church building. They may have met under a tree, in a barn, or in a house, as they often did in the Bible. But, the fact remains that Jesus went to church and preached in the church. Jesus also said that He was going to sing God's praises in the church.

Did Jesus need to go to church. Absolutely. The Bible says He emptied himself of deity and became a man. He did what He did, not as God, but as man. Otherwise, He could not have been our pattern. Jesus needed to go to church because He was a man. It was not to keep Him from sinning, but for encouragement and fellowship, the same reasons we need to go to church.

5. Jesus is to be preeminent in the church.

And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the first born from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. Colossians 1:18

Jesus must have the preeminence in every organization of the church. He is to have the preeminence in the preaching. He is to have the preeminence in the singing. I believe that songs about Jesus should be sung in the church, rather than high-brow anthems that are used in so many circles today. Jesus is to have the preeminence in the Christian school. Jesus is to have the preeminence in the Women's Missionary Society. Jesus is to have the preeminence in the bus ministry. Jesus is to have preeminence in all of the ministries of the church.

6. Jesus is the head of the church.

And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all. Ephesians 1:22,23

And he is the head of the body, the church... Colossians 1:18a

Jesus is the head of the body. The church is the body of Christ. The word *head* is similar to the President of a business. It means that it is his body in the sense of ownership or control, not in the sense of being a physical body. The word *head* means authority. He is the authority of the church. He is the head of the church like the owner of a store is the head of that store. The church is a body of people that belongs to him.

If the body of Christ is all believers, then the church is all believers, but the church cannot be all believers, because the word *church* means a called-out assembly. All believers are never called out, so the

church could not be His body in that sense. There will be a day when all Christians will be a member of the church, but that will not be until all Christians are called out. Hebrews 12:23 refers to a host assembled in Heaven. All believers will not be the church until all believers are raptured.

And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns... Revelation 13:1a

That word *head* is the same word found in Colossians 1:18 and Ephesians 1:22 where Jesus is called the head of the church. These heads are kings. A king has authority. A king is the head of his nation and the people which they control form the body. These kings are called the head just like Jesus is called the head of the church.

And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: Colossians 2:10

Jesus is the head of all principality and power. That is referring to governments and rulers. Jesus puts up kings and sets down kings. Jesus is the head of all of the governments and all government leaders in this world. They cannot do anything that God does not allow them to do.

He is called the head of principalities and powers just like He is the head of the church. He is listing something over which He has control. The world's governments no more make up His body, then Christians do. It merely signifies authority. He is the authority over the world's leaders.

Wives submit yourselves to your own husbands as under the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife. Ephesians 5:22, 23

A man is the head of his wife, but that does not mean she is his body. It means that he is the authority of the home. This is not talking about a male head on a female body. As the husband is the head of the wife, so is Christ the head of the church. What does it mean? As the wife obeys her husband, so the church is to obey Christ. He is the head or the authority. In that sense Jesus is the head of the church and the church is His body. Consequently, the church cannot be an invisible church of all believers because the body is the church and the church is a called-out assembly.

This doctrine of all believers being members of the body of Christ is an attempt by Satan to unite us with people with whom we are commanded not to unite. It is an effort to say that we are all members of this body when, in reality, we are not.

7. Jesus is building a church.

But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect. And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. Hebrews 12:22-24

All believers will be called out and assembled in the sky. They will be called unto Jesus, and then all believers will become a church. God is now in the process of building an army of people which someday will become a church.

Let me give you three extreme positions regarding this issue.

1. That the church is the bride of Christ. Some men teach what we call the doctrine of the Baptist Bride. They believe that the only people who will be a part of the bride at the marriage of the Lamb will be Baptists, and all other saved people will merely be wedding guests. Of course, this is not true. These people get the body mixed up with the bride. The bride will not be a bride until we get there, so it will include all believers. The future church will be the bride. The present church is not the bridal; it is the body.

They are also wrong because many Baptist churches are liberal. How can all Baptists form the bride when there are hundreds of American Baptist churches that do not even believe that the Bible is the Word of God. There are some churches that do not call themselves Baptist which are New Testament churches. If Baptists form the bride, these New Testament churches will not be in the bride. So, according to them, a liberal American Baptist church would be in the bride, but a *fundamental* church that is not Baptist will not be in the bride. That is totally untrue.

2. The term the rapture of the church is unscriptural. We will not become a church until we assemble in the sky. At the rapture we will form a church because then we will assemble, but right now all believers are not yet a church.

All believers do not belong to the church. Somebody needs to set Baptists straight and stop them from being influenced by the inter-denominational crowd. I am not opposed to inter-denominational Christians, but I am opposed to their doctrine about the church. In the average inter-denominational school, many of those who are preparing for full-time Christian work are studying to start orphanages, or to be missionary pilots, or to do Christian drama or Christian movies.

At Hyles-Anderson College we are training men to start churches. We are training young women to go out and teach in the Christian schools started by those churches. We are training young men to go out and lead the singing and be bus directors in those churches. That is the hope for America.

Chapter Eighteen

The Church and the State

Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Will thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same. For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must need be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour. Romans 13:1-7

The United States Government believes in the separation of church and state with the Catholics, but not the Baptists. Let me give you an example. If Mr. Noriega came to the First Baptist Church of Hammond seeking asylum, the government would break down the doors of the building to get to him. But, he went to the Catholic embassy in Panama, and our government did nothing to get to him. Why? Because our government respects separation of church and state with the Catholics, but not with other people.

Let me make eleven observations regarding this matter of the separation of the church and the state.

1. There are two kingdoms.

Again, the Devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; Matthew 4:8

The words kingdoms of the world shows us that there is a kingdom of the world.

Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. John 18:36

Jesus said that His kingdom is not of this world, so that means there have to be two kingdoms on this earth. There is the kingdom of this world and there is the kingdom of our God. God set it up this way. These two kingdoms have two different kings, the kings of the world and Jesus, our King.

2. We live in both and are to be subject to both.

They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's. Matthew 22:21

The Roman Empire was the kingdom of this world under which they lived at that time. Jesus commanded them to give to God's kingdom what was His and to give to Caesar's kingdom what was his.

3. Each is to allow the other to exist and operate. The kingdom of God and the kingdom of this world are just as separate as the government of Canada and the government of the United States. These two kingdoms have no more right to try to control each other than we have to control Canada, or Canada has to control us.

It is more than just the church not influencing the state, and it is more than the state not running the

church. They are two separate kingdoms. Neither is answerable to the other, and neither is supposed to operate or run the other. The kingdom of God is not to do anything to hinder the operation of the government, nor is the government to do anything to hinder the operation of God's kingdom. It is not the church's business what the government does, and it is not the government's business what the church does. They are two kingdoms operating with two different kings, two different philosophies, two different constitutions, and two different theories.

4. There are naturally two great threats. One threat is the state controlling the church, and the other is the church controlling the state. There are countries in this world where the church controls the state, and there are countries in this world where the state controls the church.

5. There are two great ideologies that embody these threats.

(1) Communism. Communism is complete control of the church by the state.

(2) Catholicism. Catholicism is complete control of the state by the church.

These two ideologies are equally deadly and dangerous. Communism is as deadly and dangerous as Catholicism, and Catholicism is as deadly and dangerous as Communism. Both are trying to bring these kingdoms together. The Bible says these are two separate kingdoms and are not to come together.

To whatever degree a country is communistic, by that same degree the state controls the church. The state is trying to control the church in America today, because America is going communistic. The philosophy of Communism is as prevalent in America today as it was in Russia 35-40 years ago.

To whatever degree a nation is Catholic, by that same degree the church controls the state. If a nation is completely Catholic, the church completely controls the state. If a nation is completely communistic, the state completely controls the church. Show me any country in this world where the Catholics are a great majority, and I will show you a country where the church keeps a thumb on the state.

When the Reformation came, Protestants continued controlling the state. Martin Luther for the most part controlled the government of much of Germany. John Calvin did the same in Geneva. Why? Because they came out of the Catholic church over doctrine, but not over the issue of the separation of church and state. The Reformation was not actually an evangelistic endeavor. These reformers took over the churches in parts of these countries and they controlled the politics and ran the cities. Why? Because they got it from their mother, Catholicism.

America used to believe this, which is why we did not have a Catholic president until the mid 1960's. We did not want the Pope running the country. Even the unsaved people were aware of that in those days. We knew how it was in other places in the world, and we did not want it to be that way here in America.

6. Each has its own area of authority. What is a government supposed to do for its people?

(1) Protect our person.

(2) Protect our property.

(3) Protect our freedom.

Those are the only three things the government is to do. The government was not started to educate our children. It is not the church's job to protect our property, that is the government's responsibility. Government education is of the Devil. It was never intended by God for the government to train our children. It is the job of the home and the church. For decades the churches trained the children. The government took over the education later on, but it was not a part of our founding.

The church's job is to do God's work. It is not the government's job to interfere with God's work. It is not the church's job to interfere with the police department. It is not the government's job to interfere with the Christian school. The kingdom of God is to spread the Gospel and do the work of God through the local churches without interference from the kingdom of this world.

7. We are to honor both. When the Mayor of Hammond comes to the First Baptist Church, he should be more intimidated than I am, because I head a more important kingdom than he does. I do not think I am important, but I think my office is important. I happen to fill the most important job in the world as a pastor of a church in the kingdom that is not of this world.

My son, fear thou the LORD and the king: and meddle not with them that are given to change. Proverbs 24:21

The king's kingdom and the Lord's kingdom are not to be interwoven, or mixed up, but we are to honor both.

8. There is a priority to our allegiance. Sometimes Christian people say, "Well the Bible says we are always supposed to obey the government." That is not in the Bible. The Lord never says to always obey the government.

Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to the good works, but to the evil. Will thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same. For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Romans 13:1-4

This passage refers to powers in the plural. The higher powers are God. God sets up the powers. The higher the power, the more the subjection. God is the one who ordained the whole thing. He is the architect of it all. He is the highest power, so our main allegiance is to be to Him. God ordains others to deter us from the evil. There is nothing wrong with having a police department, a Governor, a President, or a Mayor, but they are lower powers than God.

As a preacher, I am His minister. There are areas where people are to obey me as their pastor, but, if there is a conflict between the pastor and God, God is the highest power. The same is true with the secular rulers, such as mayors, governors, or city councilmen. Our major allegiance is to the Highest Power and as long as other powers do not conflict with the Highest Power, then we are supposed to be obedient to the other powers as well.

For this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour. Romans 13:6, 7

God says we are to obey the higher powers, but our first allegiance is to the highest power. If there is a conflict between the lower powers, the higher the power, the more the allegiance. Let me illustrate.

If the city of Hammond passed a law stating that we could go soul winning, we would still go soul winning. We are going to keep the law of God. He commands us to go soul winning, so we would go soul winning. If they put us in jail, we would witness to the jailer. That is what Paul did.

Consider a few examples.

Daniel prayed at a certain time each day in a certain way. They passed a law declaring he could not do it. Daniel decided not to change his prayer life because of a law of man. Daniel broke the law and was put into the lion's den. He was subject to the highest power first and the lesser powers next.

If the law had said not to burn leaves when the wind was blowing from the north, Daniel could have obeyed that law, but when the king exerted authority over the other kingdom, God's man refused to obey it.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego broke the law. The law said they had to bow down and worship a golden image. The kingdom of God said, *Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image... Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them...* Suddenly, there was a conflict between the kingdom of this world that says bow down and worship the image, and the kingdom of God which says not to bow down and worship the image. God says we are to obey His law over this kingdom's law.

The world's kingdom has no right to make a law that is against God's kingdom. The world's kingdom has no right to say who can and who cannot pray. This world's kingdom has no right to say whom you may or may not worship. The world's kingdom has no right to say whether or not you may go soul winning. Only God's kingdom has the right to tell us how to do the work of God.

And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. Acts 4:18-20

A law was passed that they could not speak in the name of Jesus. They got over in the other kingdom. Washington has no authority over the program of the First Baptist Church of Hammond, Indiana, or the schools we operate. It is none of their business. It is none of our business to pass a speed limit law or the fire code. That is the kingdom of this world's business, but the kingdom of the world should pass no laws that have to do with the program of the kingdom of God.

And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ. Acts 5:42

The kingdom of this world said to cease. The kingdom of God said we will not cease. They had passed a law that infringed on the wrong kingdom. The kingdoms of this world had passed a law that had to do with the kingdom that is not of this world, but there was already a law passed by the king of the kingdom of God. He said, *Go ye therefore and teach all nations.*

The law of the one kingdom said not to speak or teach in the name of Jesus. The other kingdom commanded us to speak and teach in the name of Jesus. In cases where you have a direct law in the kingdom of God, and a direct opposite law in the kingdom of this world, we are to obey the kingdom of God over the kingdom of this world.

It is amazing how many Christians criticized Lester Roloff when he was fighting his battles in Corpus Christi. The state of Texas said they would close his homes if he refused to obey their laws because they would have forced him to disobey the laws of God regarding the way his ministry operated. Why have a Christian home if you are forced to operate it like a heathen home? The very purpose was to have a home which was controlled by the kingdom of God. I do not care what the Congress or the Supreme Court says, they have no right to get over into the other kingdom. They are totally separate kingdoms.

The government does not want you to have anybody above them. They want to run your life. I am going to stand up and hold the banner high to save the freedom of the kingdom of God, so that the kingdom of this world will not boss us and destroy our homes and families. Communism is dedicated to the destruction of

the American family.

9. The accreditation of church schools is one kingdom ruling the other. The kingdom of this world has no more right to accredit the kingdom that is not of this world than the kingdom that is not of this world has a right to accredit state universities.

Brother Roloff used to go up and down this country warning preachers not to get a license from the government, because it is the kingdom of this world running God's kingdom. The kingdom of this world has no business to run the kingdom of God. None at all. Accreditation of church schools is one kingdom telling the other how to operate.

The fire inspector has the right to come out and inspect our buildings to be sure they are safe because that is part of his responsibility of protecting us. I am for that because I love the young people in those schools. I am more concerned about their safety than he is. He is of the kingdom of this world, and the king of this world is supposed to provide for the safety of our persons.

Whom we choose to teach in our schools is the kingdom of God. What is taught in our schools is the kingdom of God. Nobody in the kingdom of this world has a right to interfere in those matters. Most people do not understand accreditation. The philosophy of accreditation is one kingdom trying to run the other. If you go to an accredited school, you are going to a school that is controlled by the kingdom of this world, which means that they are controlling the kingdom of God.

They want to have a part in training our teachers. Our country is going to the Devil because of the teachers the world has trained. Why would we start Christian schools so they could train our people to be just like theirs? We started Christian schools because we were sick and tired of the government ruining our kids. It is not their business to train our kids. It is their business to keep us safe, protect our property, and keep our freedom. It is not their business to run our schools. Accreditation is a transgression between the kingdom of this world and the kingdom of God.

10. Neither is to tax the other. They are not supposed to tax us, and we are not supposed to tax them. I have as much right to call the City Council and Mayor of Hammond and demand their tithes, as they have to tax the church. We went to court when some of the city fathers wanted to tax our parking garage. The parking garage is as much a part of First Baptist Church as our parking lot across the street. We are not as a church to be forced to pay taxes to the kingdom of this world.

11. Neither should support the other's schools. It is not the job of one kingdom to pay for the schools of the other kingdom; yet, part of our taxes are used to pay the salaries of the heathen, godless people who teach in the public schools. They have no more right to tax me to pay for their kingdom schools that I have a right to tax them to pay for our kingdom schools.

I am unalterably opposed to tuition credit. The kingdom of this world is sneaky. They will offer to give us a \$500 allowance, if our child goes to a private school. It sounds good, but who is going to decide which schools qualify and which ones do not? The world's kingdom is going to decide. They will then want to check our schools. We are not putting our school up for government approval.

How is the government going to decide what schools are approved? They will have to check out the school, at which point they have entered the kingdom over which they do not belong. We have invited them, and we have chosen to lose our freedom.

That is the philosophy behind the separation of church and state. It is two different kingdoms, neither of which is supposed to govern the affairs of the other. I believe that there will be people in America who will have to die or go to jail over these issues within the next twenty-five years. This is an important part of the teaching we need to perpetuate among our people, to better help them understand all they need to know about the church.

Chapter Nineteen

What Changes a Church

I have seen great churches all across this nation totally change after the pastor who built the church to its greatest days went off the scene, or passed away. That may happen at First Baptist Church, but I have done my best to prepare my people for the pitfalls ahead. I have preached in the great churches of the last generation. I have seen many of those churches decay. I have seen the change that has come in those churches. I have watched carefully what has caused that change, especially in the case of the pastor passing away or retiring.

The first time that I met Dr. Lee Roberson, he was forty-three years of age. Dr. Roberson stayed for many years at the Highland Park Baptist Church in Chattanooga, but the day came when Dr. Roberson felt he could no longer do the job because of his age. He was around seventy-five years of age, and he felt that he should turn it over to somebody else. One Sunday night he and Mrs. Roberson walked out the center aisle together, and his ministry there, after over forty years, was over. I had the privilege to preach over 125 times at the Highland Park Baptist church at Chattanooga.

When I met Dr. G.B. Vick for the first time, he was about forty years old, but the years came and went. He pastored the largest church in the world at the time, the Temple Baptist Church in Detroit, Michigan. I was preaching in Rocky Springs, Wyoming. I called my secretary, Mrs. McKinney, and she told that she had just received a phone call from the Baptist Bible College at Springfield, Missouri, where Dr. Vick was speaking. Dr. Vick was at his desk and suddenly fell over dead. He had pastored there for over thirty years.

For forty-two years I watched a generation of churches rise and fall. I doubt there is a man in this generation who has preached in more churches in America than I have. I doubt there is a man has counseled more pastors than I have. I have watched a generation of churches decay, I am going to do everything I can to see to it that fifty years from now the First Baptist Church of Hammond will still have the altar full every Sunday and still be the same as it is today.

Change is a state.

Change is constant.

Dissatisfaction is a state. If you are not satisfied with what you have, you will not be satisfied with what you get. If you are not satisfied with the job you have, you will not be satisfied with the job you get. If you are not satisfied with the house you have, you will not be satisfied with the house you get. If you are not satisfied with the car you drive, you will not be satisfied with the car you get. Change is a state.

When you change, you never get where you are going, because when you get where you thought you were going, you do not want to stop, so you keep on changing. What starts the change? What causes a church to change?

What causes a church to change?

1. A pastor change.

(1) The people want a change. Something in people causes them to want a different kind of man. It is like politics. When the Republicans are in, they get blamed for everything. When the Democrats get in, they get blamed for everything. The same thing happens in a church. It is easy for the people to get enamored with a man who is totally different than the preacher they had before. Suddenly you have change just for the sake of change.

(2) The people will not follow the new pastor even if he is what he ought to be. The former pastor did things a certain way, and the people will not follow the new pastor because he does them differently. They are accustomed to the way things were done rather than to following the man of God.

(3) The people call a good speaker or a good personality. Preaching is the most important thing in the church, but the best preacher in America could not operate a church like First Baptist Church, unless he knew something about business. A church should not call a pastor just because he has a personality with charisma, or because he is a good preacher. Too often churches make the calling of a pastor more of a personality or popularity contest.

I have known some great soul-winning churches which have gone down because the church called another kind of preacher. Some have changed because they called a good man the people would not accept. Others have changed because they called a pulpiteer only, and not a man who could operate the business and administration of the church.

(4) Some churches change because the church falls in the hands of a few people who are either wealthy or influential. I knew of a church that lost its soul winning because it allowed seven wealthy men to choose the pastor. They changed its entire direction and practically destroyed everything that the great pastor before had built. Most of the people wanted an old fashioned fundamental preacher, but the control was in the hands of those seven men.

2. The pastor changes. Churches change because of what is behind the pulpit. I am not the best Christian in the church, but I am the Pastor-Bishop-Builder of the church. I keep my hands on everything that goes on in the church. I go out to the college to keep the direction right there. I meet every week with the administrators of all our schools to see to it that they keep on the right track. Every ministry of the church must be watched, or something will creep in that could change the church.

You cannot imagine the pressure of an independent, hell-raising, barn-storming, window-rattling, shingle-pulling, temperamental, fundamental Baptist preacher. There is more pressure on a man who preaches the truth of God's Word than there is on any other single profession in the world. The greatest leaders in this world are not in White Houses and in palatial mansions; they are in the parsonages of America.

There are several ways that a preacher can change.

(1) He loses his motivation. Dr. Elmer Towns said that hardly any pastor continues to see his church grow after his fortieth birthday. Why? Because the pastor loses his motivation. It is easy for a young preacher who is pastoring his first church to be excited with the newness of the challenge. Just the idea of being a pastor and the opportunity to preach are enough to keep him motivated for a while. That is some of the best preaching he will ever do. His entire motivation is to preach what he believes is right and what the people need.

After a while, the difficulties of the ministry begin to wear on him. The honeymoon with the people begins to wear off. The newness is gone, and people start to get upset with him for not doing things the way they think things should be done. Soon, he starts to get discouraged or disillusioned. It is not much fun to him any more. That is what happens to pastors.

I work incredibly hard to stay motivated because I want to go out with the same zeal I had when I started. I want to go out hating the Devil just as much as I did when I started. I want to go out hollering as loud as I did when I started. It is not an easy thing for a preacher to keep himself motivated.

(2) He loses his vision. Proverbs 29:18 says, *Where there is no vision, the people perish.* That means when a leader has lost his vision for the members, the members perish. It does not mean that if I have no vision for myself, I will perish, but if I have no vision for my people, they will perish.

I have visions for my church. I have visions for the young people. My heart is broken when the young people do not fulfill the visions I have for them. I have visions for the kind of young ladies that our young men will marry. I have visions for the kind of young men our young ladies will marry. I have visions for Hyles-Anderson College. I have visions for Hammond Baptist Schools. I have visions for the kind of Christians I want my people to be.

It is so sad to see preachers who have lost their vision. The motto for my ministry has always been: **I will not use my people to build my work; I will use my work to build my people.**

When I stood outside and watched our building burn to the ground back in 1964 I did not shed one single tear, but I sat in my office and wept for hours because of a person in the church who went astray. My vision is not for buildings; it is for my people.

What happens is the work becomes more important to the preacher than his people. His prestige, or his standing in the ecclesiastical neighborhood, becomes more important than his people. Money becomes more important than the people. I never dreamed my church would become as big as it did, but I had a vision that the young people would turn out right. The older a preacher gets, the more difficult it is to maintain the vision.

(3) The pastor loses his bite. A preacher needs to be able to keep on preaching hard even as he grows older and begins to mellow. The older I become, the more difficult it is. The more I love my people, the more difficult it is. I do not want to scold my people because I love them.

A preacher has to keep his bite. A preacher without a bold streak will not amount to anything. Too many preachers start getting soft, and, before they know it, they have changed.

(4) The older people settle down. I preached at most of the greatest churches in this nation over the past forty years. I have also gone back and preached in many of those same churches after they changed. Here is what happened to them. They started out with a group of young people who were excited about building the church and winning the lost. They had the bus routes, went soul winning, and built the Sunday school classes. Over the years, they retired to the pew. They are fundamental people, but they are not busy for the Lord like they used to be.

The best way for a church to change is for the older people to quit the choir, quit their soul winning, quit their bus routes, quit their Sunday School classes, quit bringing folks to church, and quit getting excited about big days. I have seen it happen. I have seen those older people settle down. I have seen the people that used to go soul winning not go soul winning anymore. If you want your grandchildren to have a great church, you have got to keep it great until they get there. How important it is not to allow the people to retire from the work of God!

(5) No few families come to replace the older ones that settle down. The secret of the First Baptist church of Hammond, Indiana, rests in the new, young couples and families that come to the church. Many years ago I started a young couples class with forty-seven people. That young couples class is now the class that meets in our auditorium. A few years later we started another couples class. Brother Colsten now teaches that couples class that used to be a young couples class. Most of the people are in their fifties or over. A few years later we started another one, and now Brother Moffitt is teaching that class of middle-age people. Then we started another one, and another one, and we kept on starting them as the years went by.

That is the secret. We always have several hundred new people in the church who came in with the new wave, and I am always on a honeymoon with that new wave.

I am concerned about having a crowd that is red-hot for God, the Bible, the Gospel, and soul winning. Fifty years from now I want there to be a man in the pulpit of the First Baptist Church who is still preaching against mixed swimming; against women wearing shorts and pants in public, and that if you are not a soul winner, you are not right with God. As long as I live, I am going to do all I can to keep it that way.

I love children. I want them to have First Baptist Church like my generation has had. If that is going to happen here, or anywhere, it will not be on accident, but on purpose.

Chapter Twenty

Outside Interference, the Enemy of the Church

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. I Peter 5:1-3

The New Testament churches grew to be extremely large. They started off with 120 and added 3,000. Then they added 5,000 which brought the total to 8,120. The Bible says that they multiplied. The smallest number you can multiply by is two, so they had to have a minimum of 16,240 church members in the one church in Jerusalem.

When Paul was writing to the church at Ephesus, he was writing to an extremely large church. The church at Jerusalem is estimated to have had somewhere between 25,000 and 50,000 church members. The same is true with the churches at Ephesus, Antioch, Corinth, and other churches.

These churches had many pastors just as we have many pastors at First Baptist Church. The larger churches began to assume authority over and interfere with the smaller churches, because there were so many things the larger churches could do. For example, today a larger church can provide literature for smaller churches.

Several things came into the church that brought opposition.

1. Salvation was attacked. They became very ceremonial, and the preaching of salvation by grace through faith was attacked.

2. Baptismal regeneration became very popular.

3. Infant baptism became popular. In those days infant baptism was by immersion. That is really where sprinkling originated. They thought it was too dangerous to immerse these infants, so they began to pour water on them and then, to sprinkle them.

Baptism was done by sprinkling rather than by immersion. After they began sprinkling babies, they extended it to adults, and began sprinkling them as well.

Opposition grew as churches grew. That is always what happens. The Devil is not concerned if we are not reaching anybody. He is concerned only if we are reaching the lost. Persecution came to these churches because they were reaching the lost.

- John the Baptist was beheaded.
- Steven was stoned.
- Matthew was killed in Ethiopia.
- Mark was dragged through the streets until dead.
- Luke was hanged.
- Peter was crucified upside down.
- Andrew was tied to a cross.
- James was beheaded.
- Philip was crucified and stoned.

- Thomas was pierced with lances.
- James the Less was thrown from the temple and beaten to death.
- Jude was shot with arrows.
- Matthias was stoned.
- Paul was beheaded.

This was happening to churches because they were growing so rapidly.

At that point these churches were independent churches. They had some influence on each other, but they had no organization whatsoever. As these churches grew, they not only grew in number, but they spread to other parts of the world. In fact, they covered the entire Roman Empire. As they grew, they wanted to get together. A desire to unite is always caused by a lack of faith. People organize because they do not think God can take care of them.

In the year 313 a new emperor came to the Roman Empire, whose name was Constantine. He had a vision of a fiery cross in the sky and the words, **By this thou shall conquer**. Constantine saw that as a sign that he was supposed to conquer for the cause of Christianity, so Constantine was supposedly converted. Maybe he had a genuine conversion experience, but Constantine got the idea that he was supposed to conquer Christianity by that vision of the cross.

He foresaw a marriage of the Roman Empire and the church. He desired to cover the entire Roman Empire with Christianity, so he brought the church and the state together. This was an attempt by Constantine to have a world religion and a world political system. This concept was started by Nimrod back in Genesis, but it never had been organized in the New Testament church until Constantine did it in 313. Constantine basically got all these churches together and started a Christian state religion.

There were some churches that would not get involved. These were Baptist churches. They refused to get involved in this new world council, or Roman council of churches.

It has always been the desire of the Devil to get all of us under one canopy. Union is not God's idea. It is the devil's idea. The union and organization of churches or nations is never of God. The United Nations is not of God. It is of the Devil. The World Council of Churches is not of God. It is of the Devil. The first world council of churches since the New Testament church was Catholicism. Constantine wanted universal government and a universal church. From that came the doctrine of the invisible or the universal church.

Most Baptists were a part of this union movement, but there were a few who refused and remained independent. That is normally the way things happen. Let me quote from a newspaper article. **Southern Baptists and Roman Catholics, the nation's two largest denominations generally have been regarded as doctrinally far apart, but their scholars find they basically agree. *Despite their terminology and some real differences we do share a basic understanding of what it means to be followers of Jesus Christ by the grace of God, says their joint report. After ten years of periodic discussions, the Baptist-Catholic Dialogue group quoting Ephesians 4:5 concludes we not only confess, but experience one Lord, one faith, one baptism.***

Those Southern Baptist churches are not New Testament churches. Baptist perpetuity has always been in the independent Baptist churches.

In 869 Constantine's hierarchy divided. The Greek Catholic church separated from the Roman Catholic church. The Greek Catholic church left for many reasons. One of the major reasons was that they did not want to be governed by Rome. They wanted their freedom; yet, they turned around and would not give people freedom under them. Most people do not want freedom; they want their freedom. People who fight for freedom will often turn around and enslave others if they can get away with it.

In the sixteenth century we had what is called the Reformation. In the Reformation, Protestants came out. For example, in 1541 the Presbyterians came out, in 1530 the Lutherans came out, and in 1531 the church of England came out.

When the Lutherans came out, they fought for their own freedom and then enslaved others. The

Presbyterians did the same thing. In every case, there were still Baptists who refused to be thwarted. While others were building cathedrals, they were in store front buildings. While others were building coliseums, they were being killed in those coliseums, but they kept on going. They were the only ones who were preaching the Gospel and getting people saved, so they kept on growing.

The more they were persecuted, the more they grew. The Presbyterians tried to put them down, but they could not do it. The church of England tried to suppress them and could not. The Lutherans tried to suppress them and failed. What kept these Baptists alive? A promise that Jesus made in Matthew 16:18, upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. The gates of hell were the Roman Catholic church and the churches that came out of the Roman Catholic church. Constantine did the world a great disservice when he decided to unite the church and the state.

Most people believe that our founding fathers came for religious freedom. No, they did not. They came for their religious freedom. For example, in the northern colonies two religions basically started there: Congregationalists and Presbyterians. In the southern colonies you basically had Episcopalians, or the church of England. Our founding fathers came to America trying to find freedom, but when they got here they established freedom only for themselves. They fought and died for their freedom of religion.

In the northern colonies, the Congregationalists and Presbyterians made it against the law for Baptists to exist. In the southern colonies, the Episcopalians made it against the law for the Baptists to exist. But, just as Constantine had trouble with the Baptists, so did those founding fathers. In fact, throughout history, every group that tried to promote the idea of a state-church has had no success in snuffing out the light of the independent Baptists. These Baptist people were always causing trouble, splitting off of somebody, preaching the Gospel, getting people saved, and baptizing them after they got saved.

Nothing has changed. Throughout history, we have been the unpopular group because we have refused to unite with the other acceptable religions of the day. The Ministerial Association of Hammond, Indiana, does not know what to do with me. When I first came to Hammond, it was amazing how many resolutions they passed against us. I would get a letter every month informing me that the local Ministerial Association had passed another resolution telling us something we could not do. We went ahead and did it anyway.

Our crowd has always caused trouble because our crowd is for freedom for everybody. The Presbyterians, Congregationalists and Episcopalians in the colonies declared that it was against the law for anybody to refuse infant baptism, or to preach the Gospel. The penalty was imprisonment, being fired, being whipped, having your property taken, or being banished. Banishment meant that you were turned over to the Indians. That happened in America.

Two men who were banished were Roger Williams and John Clark. Both of these men made friends with the Indians and saved their colony, because the Indians were going to destroy them. Instead, the Indians did what they said.

Roger Williams and John Clark had no place to have freedom of worship. They found a little piece of land and started their own colony, but they could not get permission from England to be recognized as a colony. John Clark went and stayed in England for many years, lobbying to try to get their little colony recognized as a colony. That little colony is now the state of Rhode Island. The state of Rhode Island was finally recognized as a colony. It was started by a couple of Baptist preachers.

They were finally recognized and drew up their Constitution. The Constitution of the State of Rhode Island included religious freedom for everybody. It was the world's first governmental declaration of religious liberty. A little group of born-again, blood-washed Baptists who were preaching the Gospel, baptizing their converts, and refusing to baptize their babies were the ones preaching and teaching separation of church and state, and religious freedom for everybody.

Today the only religious group in the world that is actively fighting for freedom for everybody is independent Baptists. Yet, today we have Baptist fellowship groups that are just as ruthless to those who refuse to join them as the Catholics ever were. They do not kill those who refuse to be a part of their group.

From the days of Constantine, to this very day, there have been independent Baptist churches all over

this country, who are fighting in the courts for their right to exist, for the freedom of their schools, and for the freedom not to be licensed with State Educational Departments.

1. Every generation must fight for its own freedom and for the freedom of others. Every generation must declare its own independence. Every generation of local churches must decide to be free.

2. We often fight for our freedom and at the same time enslave others.

3. We start the new structure with the same seeds of death that caused the last generation to die. You can go to the so-called independent Baptist annual meetings, and it is just like it used to be in the Southern Baptist meetings. We pull out of that which enslaved us and then start building the exact same machinery that caused them to die. It is not just being enslaved to bad people that is bad. It is being **enslaved** that is bad. It is not losing your freedom to tyrants that is bad. Is **losing your freedom** that is bad.

Here is what happens. Here is an old preacher who has been enslaved. He has been called a nut and a screwball all of his life. He decides that he is not going to put up with the slavery anymore. He is going to be free. A group of those little guys get together and become independent. Suddenly they see stars in their eyes. They have a chance to be somebody after all. They get to be the president of the Independent Baptist Fellowship of their county. It has started all over again.

Totally independent churches are the answer. It is the philosophy of interference outside the local church that is wrong. It is not whether it is good or bad interference. Our churches are dying because we are letting somebody off in some office somewhere write the literature that our people teach on Sunday. The answer is cooperation only, but not to be enslaved, and not to enslave. That is the difference between independent Baptist churches and every other religious movement the world has ever seen since the New Testament church was started. The difference is, we will not be enslaved and we will not enslave!

Chapter Twenty-One

The Church As the Bride of Christ

Submitting yourself one to another in the fear of God. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. Ephesians 5:21-27

Baptists have been educated by inter-denominationalists, so we have garnered much of the doctrine that was taught by the Protestants and not by our Baptists forefathers. One of those doctrines is concerning the bride of Christ. Our inter-denominational friends have influenced us to believe that all believers are the bride of Christ, the body of Christ, and the church.

Recently, I was reading a book by a well known inter-denominationalist. All through the book he presumed that all believers formed the church, and if you are saved, you are a member of the church. No, if you are saved, you are saved, but you are not automatically a member of the church. I have no axes to grind with him about salvation. I strongly disagree with him about the church. Likewise, most Christians have automatically assumed that everybody who is saved is a member of the bride of Christ.

All believers do not form the bride of Christ.

1. The word bride is mentioned only five times in the entire New Testament. John the Baptist used it once when talking about being the friend of the bride. They thought he must be the Saviour. He told them that he was just a wedding guest and that the Bridegroom was coming later. He was not referring to all Christian people. He was merely talking about himself.

The word bride is not mentioned in any of the Epistles. In fact, it is not mentioned again until Revelation 18:23. It is also mentioned in Revelation 21:2, Revelation 21:9 and Revelation 22:17.

And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: Revelation 18:23a

And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. Revelation 21:2

And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talk with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. Revelation 21:9

And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. Revelation 22:17a

Apart from John talking about the bridegroom in a brief illustration about himself, there is not a single mention of the word bride, in any connection, until **Revelation 18:23**. The rapture takes place in Revelation 4:1, so the word bride is not mentioned until after the rapture.

Revelation 21:2 refers to the New Jerusalem coming down from God out of Heaven after the

millennium.

Revelation 21:9 and **Revelation 22:17** refer to the same thing, all of which transpires after the rapture.

All saved people do not become a bride until after the rapture. There is no bride of Christ today. There is no place in the Bible where it mentions anything about us now being the bride of Christ. That is only in some inter-denominational theologian's commentary. It is not in the Bible.

I make an issue out of this because I am bothered by the fact that *fundamental* Baptist churches are swallowing the fallacy that all believers form the church, the body of Christ, and the bride of Christ; none of which is true.

Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.
Revelation 19:7, 9a

The marriage supper of the Lamb takes place after the marriage. It is the reception. **Revelation 19:7** talks about the marriage of the Lamb. The marriage of the Lamb takes place during the seven years after the rapture. We are caught up in the air and during that seven year period, there is the marriage of the Lamb.

A woman becomes a bride at marriage and not before. The marriage of the Lamb is in the air after the rapture. Only then will we become the bride. You become a bride after the marriage, so we will not form the bride of Christ until after the rapture. The word bride is not mentioned in the entire Bible concerning God's people until after the rapture, because we are not His bride until the wedding has been performed.

All believers are members of his family, but all believers are not members of the church. You must join a church to be a member of a local body. The church is His body, so all believers are not in His body. All believers are not in the church, and all believers are not in His body. When Jesus comes again, at the rapture all believers will be called out and will assemble in Heaven. All believers will then become members of the church, because then we will all be a called-out assembly. That called-out assembly, or church, will become his bride, but this does not happen until the rapture.

2. There is no mention of the church now being His bride. In all of the letters to the churches there is no mention of them being His bride. In fact, the word "bride" is not mentioned in any of them.

3. The bride and the body are never the same in this age. There are people who believe that they are the same. Consequently, they believe that only the people who belong to the New Testament church are members of the bride and that everybody else will be wedding guest in Heaven. That is not right. All people who belong to a New Testament church are simply church members now. At the rapture when all of us form a church in the sky, all believers will be the bride and the church, but this is after we have been called out and have assembled.

4. The future church will be the bride.

For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Ephesians 5:23

The local church is His body by possession. When it says that He is the saviour of the body, it means that the only way to continue being called a local church is to continue being purified by Jesus.

Speaking to the church at Ephesus, Revelation 2 says, *...repent, and do thy first works; or I will come*

unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick... The candlestick is the church. He is saying that He would not recognize them as a church unless they got back to soul winning.

Jesus is the savior of the body. The body is the church, or the called-out assembly. The only way a church can continue being a New Testament church is to yield to Him and He will preserve it.

Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you the overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. Acts 20:28

And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church. Acts 20:17

Paul called for the preachers of the church, not churches, in Ephesus. It is referring to the local church in Ephesus. These preachers at Ephesus could not possibly feed all believers. They could feed only that local assembly; yet, he commands them to feed the whole assembly of God which He hath purchased with His own blood. Jesus purchased, not only our salvation, but He also purchased the local church when he died on the cross. He not only died to save us from our sins, but also so that we could have an organization to feed and mature us in the Lord.

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.
Ephesians 5:25

The word *sanctify* means to set apart. The local church is not the bride of Christ, but it is set apart to become the bride of Christ. In Bible days, an engagement was stricter than it is now. It was a legal and binding contract, and could not be broken.

I will be His bride, but nothing can allow the contract to be broken. Neither party can break the contract.

We sing, “**A glorious church without a spot or wrinkle, washed in the blood of the Lamb**” I am not against singing this, but it is not yet true. The church has spots, and it has wrinkles, otherwise Jesus would not need to keep on washing it. At the rapture we will be a glorious church. The word *glorious* means perfect. We will be a glorified church when all the believers are caught up in the air. Our bodies will be changed, we will be like Him, and we will be without spot or wrinkle. Then we also will be His bride. We are not yet fit to be His bride. He wants a glorious bride without a spot or wrinkle.

When the rapture takes place and all of us are caught up in the air, the church, the body, and the bride will all be the same. We will not be the bride until we get to the wedding, but we are already sanctified or set apart.

The church is the only institution in this world that was purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ. It is His unit of battle. It is His arsenal where we get our weapons.

The Bible gives no evidence that all Christians are a church. The word *church* is the ekklesia, meaning called-out assembly. When did all believers ever assemble? They did not. In Acts 7, the Israelites were called a church, but they were not called a church in Egypt because they were not assembled in Egypt. It talks about the church in the wilderness. They became a church when they were called out of Egypt and assembled in the wilderness.

On the Passover night, they were delivered from the bondage of Egypt and were called out into the wilderness where they assembled around the tabernacle. A pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night guided them. There they assembled and were called a church because they were a called-out assembly. There was no church in the Old Testament, except when God’s people assembled in the wilderness.

Likewise, God’s people will not be a church until we are out of this heathen land and are caught up to

assemble in the sky. Then we become the church, and then we will be married to Christ at the marriage of the Lamb. We are already members of the family of God. We are going to Heaven when we die, and we are going to form a group at the rapture that will be His bride. Until then, the church and the body are the same because the church is the called-out assembly and that called-out assembly is the body of Christ.

Maybe this worries you a little. All of your life you have been taught that we are the bride of Christ. What I have explained in this chapter is exactly what Baptists were taught historically. Too much of our theology has come from those who came from Protestant backgrounds, like the inter-denominational colleges. We must go back to the truth of the Bible and teach our people the truth concerning the church and its importance to the work of Christ.

Chapter Twenty-Two

The Catholic Influence on Baptist Churches and How It Got There

And there came one of the seven angels which has seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgement of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration. And the angels said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns. Revelation 17:1-7

Catholics have had an unbelievable influence on our Baptist churches. I am going to take you step by step to reveal exactly how that influence took place.

In the Bible, a bad woman is a symbol of false religion, and a good woman symbolizes the true faith in Jesus Christ. Here we have an introduction to a false religion, the great whore. Notice that this **whore** *sitteth upon many waters*. The many waters represent many Gentile nations of the earth. That means she is a universal whore. Whatever her religion is, it is a universal religion, which has joined together the kings of the earth. It is referring to a union of church and state.

The word *fornication* goes with the word *whore*. It means an unholy relationship without love. This religion does not love the state, but for her own gain, attaches herself to the state. The state, for her own gain, interacts with this religion.

There are two beasts in Revelation 13. One is a political beast and the other an ecclesiastical beast. The political beast is the head of something like the World Council of Churches. This false religion is sitting upon this beast, which means there is a union of church and state.

Daniel 2 gives us a picture of a big image or beast. That beast's head is gold, dressed in arms of silver, with belly and legs of brass and feet and toes of iron and clay. Those four metals represent four empires that have conquered the world. The first empire was the Babylonian Empire. The second was the Empire of the Medes and Persians, conquered by the Grecian Empire. Then there is the Roman Empire. There is one world empire that has not yet come, and that is the ten toes of iron and clay.

The Bible says there will be another world empire that will have ten kings. It will be a revival of the Roman Empire. The ten kings in that empire will be something like the United Nations. It will actually be a Western Confederacy, over which the anti-Christ will have control. That empire will be very wealthy.

This woman represents the Roman Catholic hierarchy. She is the mother of harlots. When all the little children have come back to her and reunited into one great false religion, the Roman Catholic church will sit on the ten-kingdom empire. The Catholic church, the National Council of Churches, and the United Nations, or revived Roman Empire, or European Common Market will all be together. All of the major religions in this world will be together, and all the major western nations of this world will be together. They will all line up against Russia.

I want you to notice several things about her.

1. She says she is a universal church. The word Catholic means universal. Today, most Baptist preachers believe in what they call the universal or invisible church. That was unheard of until this century. There is, of course, no such thing as the universal, invisible church. Baptists, all the way back to the Anabaptist days, believed in the local New Testament church.

She possesses formalism in her worship. Roman Catholicism has always been for robed clergy and a robed choir. Up until this century you could not find a Baptist church that had a robed choir. For 1900 years Baptist churches did not have them, because the Roman Catholic churches did. That is why I would never wear a robe when I preach. Until this century robes were unheard of in a Baptist church.

It is shocking how many Baptist churches have three candles on their communion table. Until this century, no Baptist church would consider having a worship center.

Until this century Baptist churches never called a church building a House of God. Spurgeon used the word meeting place to describe his building. He did not call his church building the House of God.

Baptists did not use the term sanctuary until this century.

Baptists did not use anthems in church until this century. Until this century you would never have heard classical music in a Baptist church. Baptist people, historically, have not been people of great wealth, nor were they people of what the world calls culture and refinement.

Ornate buildings are unique to this century for Baptist churches. I dare you to find the cathedrals that Baptists have built. You will find great cathedrals built by the Catholics and her babies, but not by the Baptists. It is unique to this century.

Baptist preachers, until this century, have never used clergy titles, such as Reverend.

Baptist churches allowing themselves or their schools to be licensed or accredited is totally unique to this age.

The Catholics and others have catechism classes a person must take before they can join the church. Now the same thing is going on in Baptist churches. When I went to First Baptist Church, you had to meet before a committee, and be examined and approved before you could be baptized. The book of Acts says that the New Testament church added daily such as were being saved. In Baptist churches all over this country you have waiting periods, which are nothing more than a form of catechism.

Think about it. Baptists had none of these things until this century:

- Universal churches
- Formal services
- Robes
- Worship centers
- Buildings called the House of God
- The term sanctuary
- Anthems
- Classical music
- Ornate buildings
- Clergy titles
- Union of church and state
- Catechism
- Waiting periods for baptism

What happened? The reformation brought forth Protestants from the Catholic church. They left the Catholic church basically over the issue of justification by faith, so basically it was a doctrinal withdrawal. These people are the children of the mother of harlots. The Baptist churches already existed before the Reformation. Since Jesus started the church, there always have been New Testament Baptist churches. Originally, you had the Baptist churches and the Catholic church. The Reformation brought about the creation

of the Protestant groups.

I admire the Reformationists. I admire the men who are now fighting for the Bible in the Southern Baptist Convention. I am not a Southern Baptist, and could not be a Southern Baptist, but there is nothing wrong with admiring their courage. We can admire the Protestants, but the fact still remains that they look very much like their mother, the Catholic church. They reorganized into a denomination that was just as powerful over the peoples as the Catholic church used to be. They pulled out doctrinally, but not organizationally.

I admire Luther and Calvin, but they never belonged to a New Testament church. The New Testament churches never sprinkled babies. The New Testament churches never had denominational bosses.

Something else happened. Over the centuries, these denominations became more and more liberal. From these denominations we had the twentieth century Reformation, or the American Reformation. This brought about the inter-denominational movement. They came toward us, but they did not come to us. We should not fight them, or criticize them, but we should not unite with them either.

Here is what happened to the Baptists. They decided they wanted to be educated. The independent Baptists had no schools, so we sent our young people to be trained in the schools which were started by those who came out of the Protestant movement and who started the inter-denominationalist movement. They trained our preachers in the doctrines and methods that they brought with them when they split. When our preacher boys came out of their schools, they had learned about the universal church, formal services, robes, worship centers, sanctuaries, anthems and classical music, ornate buildings, clergy titles, union of church and state, and catechism.

All of these things came from the phenomenon of the inter-denominationalists. The Independent Baptists had few colleges until J. Frank Norris started a school in Texas. Later, the Baptist Bible Fellowship started a school in Springfield, Missouri, but Independent Baptists still had no place to train their preachers.

I am not opposed to inter-denominational schools. I am not opposed to a barber college, but it is not a good place for a Baptist preacher to train. I am opposed to medical school, but that is not a good place for a Baptist preacher to train. I am not opposed to these Bible colleges, but along with the truth they brought out of the Protestant movement, they also brought much error. They brought their formal worship services.

Two things happened when we sent them our preacher boys there to get trained.

1. They received good Christian training.

2. They did not receive good church training.

You cannot divide the two. If the church was not important, Jesus would not have started it. They received good training that the blood of Jesus washes away our sin; they received good training in walking with God; they received good training in prayer; they received basically good training in the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, but they received no training concerning the New Testament church; they received no training concerning the ordinances of the New Testament church. They still preached the Gospel, but did not believe in our Baptist heritage.

Tragically, in many cases, they “looked down their noses” at the crude old-fashioned ways the Baptists did things. There are hundreds of pastors in Baptist churches today who are not Baptists. Our Baptist heritage has been diluted. Perhaps even more tragic is the fact that all over the world there are preachers who were won to Christ by old-fashioned Baptist missionary and then came to an inter-denominational college in the United States to get their training. They have gone back to their home countries and taken with them the inter-denominational teaching they received here. They have taken back the formal worship services, the doctrine of the universal church, the robes, the worship centers, the anthems, etc.

A phenomenon has happened in our generation. **We have started our own Christian schools in Baptist churches.** Thirty years ago you barely could find a Baptist church that had a Christian day school. Now it is difficult to find one that does not. There are thousands of Baptist churches operating Christian day

schools across America.

We have started our own Christian colleges in Baptist churches. Baptist colleges are being started all over America. We no longer have to send our boys to be taught that there is such thing as the invisible universal church, and to dress our choirs and preachers like Catholics do. I am not angry at anybody with a robed choir, but they did not get it from our Baptist history. They got it from the Catholics. Love them. Pray for them. Thank God for them, but do not allow them to train our young people. We are still Baptists. I thank God for the Gospel they preach, but I am still a Baptist. America needs a soul-winning *fundamental* Baptist church in every neighborhood.

There is still one danger. We must be careful that we do not staff our faculties with teachers who have been trained by the very institutions we are trying to avoid. In many of our churches we have already allowed the inter-denominationalist to invade us through our schools.

It is also important that we continue to train our preachers in colleges started and controlled by independent fundamental Baptist churches. Divine perpetuity has been promised to the church, not to the school. A school without the canopy of a church must die.

Now we have our own schools with our own teachers. In the next few years something incredible is going to happen in America. There is going to be a resurgence of real Baptists. We do not have to send our students to the inter-denominationalists for training anymore.

We did not realize it, but for many years we have been influenced by the Catholic church. From her came some harlots, and from those harlots came people of conviction. Thank God for them, but although they came toward us, they did not come to us. There is something better, and that is the doctrine of local New Testament, independent Baptist churches, who start their own schools, run their own business, are bossed by nobody, but God Himself!

Chapter Twenty-Three

What Is a Fundamental Baptist Church?

Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called: Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied. Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. Jude 1-4

The word fundamental is a relative word. It becomes an adjective instead of a noun when it is used to describe a Baptist church. It is a shame that we have to say fundamental Baptist church, because all Baptist churches ought to be fundamental.

The word fundamental means, **one who holds to the original faith and practice of a movement.** A Masonic Lodge can have fundamentalists. If you go back to the fundamentals of the Masonic Lodge, you are a fundamental Mason. The word fundamentalist does not apply just to a group of Baptists. It can apply to any group. There are many kinds of religious fundamentalists, and there are even many kinds of Christian fundamentalists.

The first Baptist church was started in about 31 A.D. It was not started on the day of Pentecost. It was started during the earthly ministry of our Lord.

The Catholic church was started in 313 by Constantine, the Emperor. Constantine united the church and the state in the Roman Catholic hierarchy.

In 1530 the Reformation came and the Lutherans started. About the fourteenth century a man named John Wycliff became very disenchanted with the Catholic church. Then came another man named John Huss, who likewise was disenchanted with the Catholic church. Following Huss came a man whose name was Savonarola. All three of these men were martyred by the Catholic church. Then came a man named Zwingli, who was also disenchanted. He became part of the Reformation. Zwingli was followed by Martin Luther, who was followed by John Calvin.

In 1531 the Episcopalian church started.

In 1541 the Presbyterian church started.

In 1602 the Congregational church started.

In 1785 the Methodist church was started by John Wesley.

In 1812 the Disciples of Christ were started. We now call them the Church of Christ, Christian churches, or Disciples of Christ.

Around 1900 the inter-denominational movement began to flourish in America.

Remember that a fundamentalist is someone who goes back to the original faith and practice of a

movement. How far back does someone have to go in order to be considered a fundamentalist? They must go back to the origin of their movement.

To be a fundamentalist Methodist a person would have to go back to 1785. A fundamental Methodist is not a fundamentalist as we Baptists count a fundamentalist. They still sprinkle because John Wesley sprinkled. They still believe in denominational lordship of the churches. They still believe that salvation can be lost because John Wesley believed it. They still believe in holiness. John Wesley was wrong on holiness. John Wesley was a great man and certainly deserves our attention as a man of character, discipline, and prayer, but not as a man of doctrine.

I believe we ought to pray for, love and admire people of other denominations, who believe the Bible, but not doctrinally like we do, but I do not think we ought to work with them. I think it is unwise to work with people that are fundamental in their own doctrine.

When I was a young preacher, I pastored the Grange Hall Baptist Church in the country, outside of Marshall, Texas. The Grange Hall Methodist Church was a good Methodist church. They had a fundamental Methodist preacher named Edmond Robb. He and I became good friends. Both of us were in the same little country neighborhood. I respected Ed Robb and the Grange Hall Methodist Church. We never had any trouble, because we did not try to unite in our efforts.

America was much better off when the Baptists worked with Baptists, Nazarenes worked with Nazarenes, and fundamental Presbyterians worked with fundamental Presbyterians, etc. We do not reveal our differences as much if we stay in our own camps and do our own work. We got the job done better back in those days as well.

I admire the fundamental inter-denominational people. I respect them, but I do not work with them. The Cumberland Presbyterian Church was about a mile and a half from our church. They had revivals just like we did. They got people saved just like we did, but they sprinkled babies and converts. Their denomination assigned the preacher to the churches. I respected them, and I prayed for their revivals, but did not unite with them.

Let's allow the fundamental Disciples of Christ, the fundamental Methodists, the fundamental Congregationalists, and the fundamental Presbyterians to live, but let us be fundamental Baptists. The Baptist distinctives that have made us different through the years are no longer precious because we have worked with good people whose doctrines were wrong in some important areas.

There are those in the Lutheran church who have returned to the fundamentals of the Lutheran church, but they are still different from a fundamental Baptist in some important areas. They still sprinkle babies. They still have the Bishopry over the churches. They are totally wrong on the doctrines of the church, baptism, and the Lord's Supper.

I respect and admire a fundamental Lutheran preacher. I rejoice with him for his morals. I rejoice because he stands for righteousness. I rejoice that he fights unrighteousness. I rejoice that he has revivals and gets people saved, but I cannot rejoice that he is wrong on the local church. I cannot rejoice that he is wrong on baptism. I cannot rejoice that he is wrong on sprinkling babies. I cannot rejoice that he is wrong on the Lord's Supper. I can thank God for him, but I will not join up with him.

To be a fundamental Baptist you must go back to Jesus. Nobody is a true Bible fundamentalist unless he is a fundamental Baptist. Nobody who sprinkles babies is a true fundamentalist because no babies were sprinkled in the Bible. To be a true fundamentalist you cannot believe in falling from grace, because the Bible teaches that you cannot fall from grace. To be a true fundamentalist you must be separated from the world. To be a true fundamentalist you must be a soul winner. You can be a fundamental inter-denominationalist and not believe in soul winning, but you cannot be a fundamental Baptist and not believe in soul winning.

A fundamental Baptist church is a church whose faith and practice goes back to 31 A.D. to Jesus. You can be a fundamental Methodist and go back to Wesley. You can be a fundamental Presbyterian and go back to Calvin or Zwingli. You can be a fundamental Catholic and go back to Constantine, but you cannot be a real Bible fundamentalist unless you go back to Jesus.

Two things cause these movements to move away from the fundamentals.

1. Unwillingness to accept the stigma of either extreme. Either position has a stigma. If a man is a strict fundamentalist, the great host of society calls him a radical. Most people do not want to be considered fanatical.

The evangelicals came along and taught fundamentalists how not to be radical. The evangelical movement was not founded because of conviction. It was founded because the evangelical people were not willing to be branded for Jesus' sake. They did not want to bear the stigma.

The farther from fundamentalism the Devil can brand as radical, the better he likes it. He likes it when more liberal Christians are called fundamentalist because it moves the line of what a radical is considered to be. If you are not fighting fundamentalist, you are an evangelical.

The neo-orthodox movement is the same thing to liberalism as the Evangelical movement is to fundamentalism. It is a way to avoid being in the extreme of a movement.

In Washington, D.C. you will not find many old fashioned conservative Republicans. Nor will you find many staunch liberals. The same concept applies. Everyone wants to be moderate, so they will not be considered radical.

The evangelical movement is nothing more than fundamentalists who use liberal terms. The neo-orthodox movement is nothing more than liberals who use fundamentalist terms. New evangelicals are those who meet somewhere in the middle.

2. A desire to gather a larger following. Many people make the mistake of believing that they will grow more by appealing to a wider scope of people. In reality, people are drawn to that which is distinct. Most people hold to extreme beliefs and are thrilled to find an institution that has not compromised those beliefs. That has been the secret of the success of the First Baptist Church of Hammond. We have done nothing to try to appeal to crowds other than proclaiming the uncompromised truth of the Word of God.

Many men who had great and growing ministries saw the opportunity to enlarge their outreach and changed their position more towards the middle. In most cases the ministries diminished.

Let me make a few observations.

1. The Devil wants to bring the term radical toward the center.

2. Let us thank God for every group that broke with their original group when it got liberal and went back to what it used to be.

3. Let us hold to our Baptist distinctives. They do matter. Baptism does matter. It is in the Great Commission. Soul winning does matter. It is in the Great Commission. The Lord's Supper does matter. It is one of the church ordinances. It does matter. The doctrine of the church does matter. Let us hold dear and treasure our Baptist distinctives while at the same time admiring those who are willing to take a stand in their denomination.

4. Let us not be ashamed of being considered radicals.

5. We had a stronger nation when each did its own work alone and the rest of us admired each other from a distance. I am a Baptist. I thank God that I am a Baptist. I thank God for my Baptist heritage. I thank God for Baptist distinctives. I thank God for the men who died for them. If they can be martyred for these Baptist distinctives, the least I can do is believe them.

Chapter Twenty-Four

How the Wall of Separation Is Broken Down

But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that brought them and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgement now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not. II Peter 2:1-3

False prophets or false teachers are people who are unsaved and are not teaching salvation by grace through faith. There are three things about which we need to be right. According to the Old Testament, the people were commanded not to mix one type of seed with another type, not to mix different cloth in the same garment, and not to plow using an ox and an ass together. That was God's law of separation.

The ox and the ass represent the true preacher and the false preacher.

The true seed represents the Word of God. We are supposed to keep the Word of God pure.

Not using different material in one garment is symbolic of salvation.

We need to be right on the man of God, the word of God, and the plan of salvation. The false teachers mentioned in II Peter are unsaved people who are trying to bring something other than the true Gospel from the true Word of God.

The word *privily* means, to sneak in somebody or something. It means that something is hiding behind something else in order for it to also get in. In this passage we see that damnable heresy had sneaked in by hiding behind something that was not a damnable heresy. These false prophets have a false doctrine they want to spread. They know we will not accept it, so they hide that false doctrine behind one with which we do agree.

For there are certain men who crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. Jude 4

The phrase *crept in unawares* is used for two things in the Bible.

1. It is used for masquerading. It is false teaching being masqueraded.
2. It is used as entering in the side door.

This passage is talking about unsaved, false teachers or prophets telling us that Jesus is not the Son of God, but not putting it up front, or that the Bible is not the Word of God, but not putting it up front.

And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage. Galatians 2:4

Our attention is turned in Galatians 2:4 from the unsaved, false teacher to brethren. It says there are certain brethren who have crept in. These Christian people who have heresy they are hiding behind some truth. They hook us to them with something with which we agree and then we believe whatever they say. Radio and television preachers are often guilty of this. They get us on a subject with which we agree and we let down our guard. Then they teach their false teachings. I am not referring to the basic doctrines, but all doctrine is important. The doctrine of church is important. The doctrine of baptism is important.

If a person is wrong on baptism, that does not make him a false prophet, but if he is wrong on baptism, we ought to beware of his false doctrine. We ought not allow him to sneak in his false doctrine behind those things upon which we do agree. This is the way churches change and the way much of our Baptist heritage has been lost. I will give you a perfect example.

Many false groups publish literature which often start with something with which you can agree. It will talk about the pre-millennial coming of Christ or the tribulation period. You will think that it must be a good book because it sounds like they believe just like we do. They get in on a doctrine with which you can agree, then you let your guard down, and the false doctrine gets in.

This is what happens to churches. The new evangelicals have many movements which are non-local church. Most of them would never join an independent fundamental Baptist church. Most of them do not believe in our convictions and standards. Most of them belong in denominations which are opposite of all the things for which we stand. Most of them are not interested in our information, our altar calls, our preaching, and our old-time religion. They only build their works on other men's members.

They get on the radio and our members become listeners. They are parasites. They do not get people saved or build churches. They do not believe that the local church is the only true church. They call the true church the invisible or universal church. Most of them do not belong to a red-hot, soul-winning, New Testament church, but they parasite off of the soul-winning church to get prospects for their unique ministry. They use issues with which our people agree to get to our people to help them support their ministries. Let me give you an example of these issues.

A preacher will get on the radio or television and fight Communism. He does not believe like we believe, nor would he be a part of our type of church, but he pulls us in on the one thing about which we agree. We then become his followers. Once we have become his followers, we become more loyal to him than to the local church pastor. This happens because we do not see his faults. He does not live with us day after day. We do not hear him preach several times a week.

I am sick and tired of the institution Jesus started being considered a second-class institution. I am tired of men who do not even go to a fundamental church becoming famous because of one issue. It is the local church that is the hope of this country!

There is a preacher in America who is a member of a denomination that has gone completely liberal. This preacher has gotten into the hearts of independent fundamental Baptist people through his teaching on the home. We all agree that American homes need to be improved. There is nothing wrong with most of what he says, but the problem is that we become his followers and put him above the local church pastor. He is a neo-evangelical who belongs to a neo-evangelical church and who is parasiting off the local church.

That is what is happening to our churches. We are falling for people because of one issue.

Many people spread false teaching by getting in the side door of the Bible. For example, Bibles to Russia. I am not against sending Bibles to Russia, but I am not for people sending Bibles to Russia who would not cross the street and tell somebody about Jesus.

Many years ago I got hooked on a radio preacher. He wrote and asked me to be on his board. Foolishly I wrote back and agreed to do so. Somebody saw my name in his paper and wrote a letter to inform me that he is charismatic. I did not know it because he never mentioned it, so I called to ask him if it were true. He hedged a bit, but would not deny it, so I resigned from his board.

Some of our heroes do not believe in our kind of standards, our kinds of convictions, our kind of old-fashioned, hell-fire and damnation preaching, our kind of soul winning, our kind of altar calls, or our kind of churches. We ought to send our money where they believe like we believe and are doing what we are doing. Jesus started the New Testament church, and we ought not support those ministries that ignore the church.

The King James issue is often used as something with which we can agree in order to get you into a false doctrine. Not every man who believes the King James has been preserved word for word is a true prophet. There is something just as important as agreeing with you on the Bible.

Practicing the Bible is important.

What should our attitude be about these people?

We should appreciate them for the good they do. We should be kind to them, but we should commit our efforts to a soul-winning, separatist, independent, Baptist church. The greatest youth programs in America are being built by local churches. The greatest child evangelism programs in America are being built by local churches. The greatest Jewish evangelism programs in America are being built by local churches.

Chapter Twenty-Five

The Sin of Denominations

And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me: Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world. Acts 15:13-18

I am going to explain why that denominationalism is wrong. That does not mean that denominations do no good, nor does it mean that there are not good people who are part of a denomination. I am sure that denominations do some good, but that does not change the fact that they are not a part of what God intended for the church.

There are four sins committed by denominationalism.

1. Denominationalism is a sin of idolatry.

And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. Colossians 1:18

Jesus is the head or the boss of the church. With that in mind, let me make four observations.

(1) Jesus is the head of the church.

(2) Anything in His place is an idol.

(3) There is no such thing as a good denomination.

(4) When an outside influence controls any segment of a church, it becomes an idol.

Consider some examples.

Literature. When you control the literature of a church you pretty well control that church. When a convention publishes its Sunday school literature, it is exerting outside influence on the local churches and is doing what God is supposed to do. That is one reason why I write all of the Sunday school lessons at the First Baptist Church of Hammond. There is no place in the Bible where God gives anybody outside the church the right to exert authority over the church.

Accreditation. Nobody has a right to accredit the institution that Jesus heads.

Government. When the Government supports a Christian school, the Government is not through with that school. When the Government supports a church, they are not through with that church. Once you submitted yourself to outside influence, you are in trouble. Every church is a local, individual, autonomous, indigenous body. It is sin for anybody to control a New Testament church from outside that church, including

the government.

Missionaries. When I was in the Southern Baptist Convention, we sent money to what they called the Cooperative Program. That money was divided and distributed at the discretion of the denominational bosses. They decide how much of that money goes to questionable schools. They decide what missionaries to support and how much to send those missionaries. The local churches have no say in where the missionary money goes. When anybody outside the church tells the church what to do, it ceases to be a New Testament church.

Ordination. It is not a denomination's business to ordain our preachers. That is the local church's job. Jesus is the head of the church. Anybody or anything that comes in between the church and Jesus is taking His place and is guilty of idolatry.

A pastor went to Portland, Oregon, area and brought some property to build a denominational church. He refused to do everything the denomination wanted, so they took his property. They had nothing to do with it, but they took his property and had to move. He now is meeting in a rented building because an unscriptural denomination took his place.

2. Denominationalism removes your promise of divine perpetuity. Jesus said, *..upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.* God has promised that a local, New Testament, independent, indigenous, Baptist church never has to die. We may choose to die, but we do not have to die. If a school is not started by a church, it does not have the promise of divine perpetuity. If the church starts the school, then the school is under the church which is under Jesus. Jesus promised divine perpetuity to the church, so if the school is operated by the church, the school has a right to claim the promise of divine perpetuity.

A school started by a group of churches does not have that. When a group of churches start a school, a church is not operating that school, so it does not have the promise of divine perpetuity. That is given to the church. Anything that comes between Jesus and the church or anything not under the canopy of the local church does not have God's promise of divine perpetuity. I thank God that all across this nation churches are starting Christian schools and colleges.

A denomination cannot start a New Testament church. If a denomination starts a church, then that church is under the control of that denomination. God does not promise divine perpetuity to a denomination. The fact that the denomination starts the church means that they are intervening and are the head of it. If they are the head, Jesus is not the head. If a church is answerable to a denomination, it is not answerable only to Jesus; consequently, it is not a true church and has no claim on divine perpetuity.

3. Denominations cause the sin of muzzling the ox.

Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the world and doctrine. For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward. Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses.
I Timothy 5:17-19

Italy is a country with its own government. Inside Italy there is the Vatican City which has its own government. That is a perfect picture of a preacher and a church. The pastor rules that pulpit and what is preached there. The people have the rule over the buildings borrowing money, etc., but they have no vote about what goes on behind the pulpit. If anybody gets inside that domain and takes over, they are guilty of muzzling the ox. The Bible says that we are not supposed to muzzle the ox.

No church flourishes unless the pastor rules that little domain inside the big domain. The Bible says you are not supposed to muzzle the ox. I am not the head of my church, but I am in charge of the pulpit. I am under

Christ in my pulpit, and we are all under Him as the church. I have no power, but the power of influence. I stand up and preach, trying to influence people as to how they should live, but I have no power over them, nor do they have any power over my preaching. My empire is inside the empire of the New Testament church. No church can be a New Testament church if the ox is muzzled.

To belong to a denomination means that the denomination ordains the preachers and gives them their papers. If they can give them their papers, they can take away their papers, so the denomination can decide at will if and when it wants to muzzle the ox.

4. Denominations cannot be of God because the church cannot build it. The only thing that can be of God in God's work is something which is built by a church. A church cannot build a denomination. You cannot put a denomination under a church. The church goes under the denomination. There are some things that a church does not build, but do some good. The grocery store does much good, but the grocery store cannot be promised divine perpetuity. The barber shop does much good, but it is not promised divine perpetuity. A denomination may do much good, but it is no better than a grocery store or barber shop as far as God's promise of divine perpetuity is concerned. It must be under the canopy of the church.

Chapter Twenty-Six

How the Devil Removes Some Landmarks

Thou shalt not remove thy neighbor's landmark, which they of old time have set in thine inheritance, which thou shalt inherit in the land that the Lord thy God giveth thee to possess it. Deuteronomy 19:14

I want to detail some of the wicked things on which God has placed a curse.

Cursed be he that maketh the blind to wander out of the way. Deuteronomy 27:18a

Cursed be he that lieth with his father's wife; because he undercoveth his father's skirt. Deuteronomy 27:20

Cursed be he that lieth with any manner of beast. Deuteronomy 27:21

The landmark was a piece of stone or metal that was placed between the property of two people. They did not have sophisticated ways of dividing property like we do today. The landmark was often moved, but not quickly, nor very far. It was moved gradually, while no one watched, or saw it, until finally property had been stolen.

Churches and schools do not decay immediately. It is a little bit today, a little bit tomorrow, and a little bit the next day. I want to explain how the Devil removes some landmarks.

I am not an intellectual, but I have made a study of Christian schools. Before Hyles-Anderson College was founded, I made trips to several cities for the purpose of finding what kind of institution the good schools were when they were founded. I was concerned about our school starting and staying right. I talked to people who were there when those schools started. I talked to faculty members, students and graduates to find out what they were like. I made a study of many of the older institutions. I wanted to find out what made schools slide and what made colleges decay.

I am going to make some observations about these.

- 1. The local church has been given the promise of divine perpetuity.**
- 2. If the school is under the church, then the school has a perfect right to claim the same promise.**
- 3. It is the job of the church to keep our schools straight.**

How is that job to be carried out?

1. The preacher should always be the overseer. Do not put an educator at the head of a Christian school. Colleges die when educators lead them. There are many Christian colleges that once had evangelists or pastors in charge, and when those men resigned, they called a suave educator, and soon the fire was gone. A pastor should be over the college and church, because the church must stay over the college.

Lay people must continually help police the institution. I tell our faculty members at Hyles-Anderson College to let me know if changes are made at the college that I do not know about. I am referring to things that are changing from what they were meant to be. The pastor cannot be in all the classrooms. He cannot be at all the meetings and athletic games. The lay people must help police the schools, so they do not

change.

Let me show you what can happen.

In 1947, an inter-denominational seminary was founded. In 1982, thirty-five years after it was founded, a poll was taken of their students. Here are some of the shocking results.

- Fifty percent were tolerant of drinking alcohol.
- Fourteen percent believed there was a Hell.
- Fifteen percent of the students believed the Bible to be infallible.

It does not have to happen, but it can happen at Hammond Baptist schools and Hyles-Anderson College or any other Christian school or college.

Let me give you what my studies found. There are eleven things that caused the destruction of a school under the canopy of a church.

1. The church must not get tired of being warned. Everybody in the church must walk guard as a sentinel around their school, not to criticize, gossip, or to try to cause trouble, but to let the preacher know when something is changing. You are not the enforcer. That is the preacher's job. If the people try to enforce, the school will die, but, if the Preacher does not know, the school will also die.

2. We must reproduce ourselves. Modern scholarship teaches that we must have a certain percentage of teachers from other universities and colleges. You cannot be accredited without doing that. At Hyles-Anderson College we are more interested in hiring professors with the right philosophies than we are with ones with the right credentials. A great pastor and the founder of a Bible College sat in a restaurant with me one day and said, "Dr. Hyles, you are doing something I wish I had done. I hired a music teacher who I thought was a good Christian. I found out a few days ago, that at night he is playing in a dance band in our city." He made the mistake of hiring by the world's standard of qualifications rather than the qualifications of the right Biblical philosophy.

Hyles-Anderson College has a unique purpose. No other school has the exact same purpose. Nobody knows that purpose better than the ones we have trained. Because of that, we usually hire our own. We do not want to dilute our purpose with hiring people from schools that have already decayed or are decaying. We will reproduce ourselves.

One of our administrators came rushing to me one day and told me that a famous Bible scholar was interested in teaching at Hyles-Anderson College. It was a man who at that time was probably one of the most famous theologians in America. I said, "At Hyles-Anderson College, we will not hire famous men, we will make famous men."

3. We must choose all faculty members who have Bible training. Schools get the idea that an English teacher has to know only English to be an English teacher. That is not the case. An English teacher in a Christian school needs to know the Bible as well. Nobody who does not know the Bible well should teach science in a Christian school. Nobody who does not know the Bible well should teach math in a Christian school. Everyone who teaches in a Christian college ought to know the Bible well enough to where he or she could teach Bible. It is not Christian education unless every teacher is a Bible student.

4. We must avoid the centrist position. As the theological winds blow, changes come in the extreme positions. The centrist positions says that we will stay right in the middle of the extremes. The centrist position says, "We will take a safe position in between those extremes." An institution ought to decide where it is going to stand. Every time the wind blows and somebody changes, we should not change. Whatever clothing is right or wrong to wear is always right or wrong to wear. If Hollywood was once wrong, it is still wrong. If the Bible was once the Word of God, it is still the Word of God, and it will not change. God is looking for people who

will not change.

Our position must not be set with regard to others. We must decide our own position. If certain standards are not popular and we lose students, let us not change the standards. You do not grow by letting down your standards; you grow by remaining faithful to your standards.

You should not try to be at any extreme. You should stand where you are supposed to stand. Forty years ago, when I started preaching, I was not very extreme. Today I am very extreme, but I have not changed. The position of the extremes have changed making me more extreme than I once was.

5. We must avoid searching for the truth. We have already searched for the truth and found it. I am not in a search to see if the Bible is the Word of God. I have searched and found to my satisfaction that it is. It is not up for reexamination. The doctrines I believe today, I believed forty years ago. I decided then what I thought was right. I am not searching for the truth; I am proclaiming the truth!

Modern education does not like absolutes. To it, everything is relative. Our nation was built on absolutes. Every great empire was built on absolutes, and every church was built on absolutes. When the absolutes leave, the growth also leaves.

6. Do not allow academic freedom. A person should not have the freedom in an institution to teach anything he believes. He should teach what that institution believes. Institutions are built by the sacrifice of individuals who believed in something enough to start the institution in order to perpetuate it. Some professor who has never built anything should not be allowed to come in and teach whatever he or she pleases.

7. Have no double standard between students and faculty. The faculty members ought to be as good soul winners as the students are. The faculty members ought to work as hard for Jesus as the students do. The teachers and leaders ought to be the example in involvement with the soul-winning ministry of the church. They ought to build great bus routes and bring their converts down the aisles. They ought to live by the same standards and convictions that the students do.

8. Every employed person in every school ought to be involved actively in the work of the local church. The church is more important than the school. When the church loses control of the school, the school is gone. The Vice President of Hyles-Anderson College has a bus route. That is the way that it always ought to be. If the college withdraws its interest and activity in the church, then the college is not a part of that which governs the church.

9. Student leadership destroys colleges. Hyles-Anderson College has no student body president, student body government, or student body newspaper. The heathen, wicked, humanist institutions have campus newspapers that feel free to criticize and rebuke their president or chancellor. They have articles that call for the firing of certain faculty members. I do not believe in that for a Christian school. I believe in administration government.

10. Keep the chapel hot. Nothing will destroy the Christian school any faster than allowing the chapel to lose its fervor and become a place of preaching style rather than preaching power.

11. We must not let the standards slip. When standards begin to slip, the school will begin to slide away from the purpose for which it was founded. We must not let our standards slip. If the student body decreases because of the standards, we should still stay with the standards with which we started. Nobody is supposed to decide our standards for us. I did not get in this business for America to like me. I got in it because I thought we ought to take a stand for what was right and against what was wrong.

In 1970 we started a school in an old dilapidated building. Our church raised \$65,000 cash, remodeled that building, and started Hammond Baptist High School. The next year we started Hammond Baptist Grade School. The next year Hyles-Anderson College was founded. If we deteriorate as fast as the aforementioned seminary did, in fifteen more years we will not believe the Bible is the Word of God, and we will not believe in a Hell, and half of us will not believe that liquor is wrong!

Every school that has deteriorated did so by allowing one or more of these eleven things to enter. We must guard the schools with our lives for the sake of our children.

Chapter Twenty-Seven

The Financing of the Church

Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. Malachi 3:8-10

When the tithes are mentioned in the Bible, they are sometimes called the tenth; sometimes they are called the firstfruits; and sometimes they are called the tithes. Occasionally they are even called the firstlings.

The life of Israel is basically divided into eight definite sections of time. I want to cover those eight sections of time going all the way to the New Jerusalem. There is something that each of these ages has in common.

1. Patriarchal. This was the time before the book of Exodus in the days of Joseph, Jacob, Isaac, and Abraham.

And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful in this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven. Genesis 28:17

And he called the name of that place Beth-el: Genesis 28:18a

And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee. Genesis 28:22

Jacob was at the house of God. Three times God's house was mentioned. Jacob said, *this is the House of God*. Then he said, *I am going to call this place Beth-el*, which means the house of God. Then he said, *this stone shall be God's house*. Three times Jacob brought the tithes to the house of God.

2. Wilderness. After they left the land of Egypt and crossed the Red Sea, they spent forty years wandering in the wilderness.

The first of the firstfruits of thy land thou shalt bring into the house of the LORD thy God. Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk. Exodus 23:19

The first of the firstfruits of thy land thou shalt bring unto the house of the LORD thy God. Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk. Exodus 34:26

The Jews had started their journey toward the Promised Land. They had crossed the Red Sea and were being given the law. Moses had been to Mount Sinai, and the Ten Commandments had already been given. God was telling them how they were to behave in the wilderness. For the second time the house of God is mentioned as the place where the tithes were to be brought. While they were in the wilderness, they had the tabernacle with them. They followed the tabernacle everywhere they went, and they were told by God to bring the tithes into the house of God or that tabernacle.

3. The time of judges. This was the time after they had left the wilderness and gone inside the Promised Land. Their first rulers were actually judges.

But when you go over Jordan, and dwell in the land which the LORD your God giveth you to inherit, and when he giveth you rest from all your enemies round about, so that ye dwell in safety; Then there shall be a place which the Lord your God shall choose to cause his name to dwell there; thither shall ye bring all that I command you; your burnt-offerings of your hand, and all your choice vows which ye vow unto the Lord.
Deuteronomy 12:10, 11

In the Book of Deuteronomy, the Israelites were getting ready to go inside the the Promised Land. God was giving them instructions on what to do when they arrived. God told them that there would be a place to put the tithes, and that place was the House of God.

4. The time of kings.

And Jehoash said to the priests, All the money of the dedicated things that is brought into the house of the LORD, even the money of everyone that passeth the account, the money that every man is set at, and all the money that cometh into any man's heart to bring into the house of the Lord. II Kings 12:4

There again the money was to be brought into the house of the Lord. In the first four ers of Jewish history they brought their tithes to the house of God. In the time of the kings, the tithes were brought to the house of the Lord. Notice that it repeatedly says to **bring** the tithes, not to just send them.

5. The time of rebuilding. This is when they came back from captivity in Babylon and rebuilt the temple, the wall and the city.

And the priest the son of Aaron shall be with the Levites, when the Levites take tithes: and the Levites shall bring up the tithes of the tithes unto the house of our God, to the chambers, into the treasure house.
Nehemiah 10:38

And I perceived that the portion of the Levites had not been given them: for the Levites and the singers, that did the work, were fled every one to his field. Then contended I with the rulers, and said, Why is the house of God forsaken? And I gathered them together, and set them in their place. Then brought all Judah the tithes of the corn and the new wine and the oil unto the treasuries. Nehemiah 13:10-12.

The Jews were back from captivity, and God was instructing them what to do about the money. The Levites were the preachers, or those who worked at God's House. They were having to work in the fields in order to make a living. They were supposed to live on the tithes of God's people. Nehemiah said that the house of God was forsaken because the Levites were working in the field. God told them to bring the tithes to the house of God.

6. The post-rebuilding days. This is the period of about four hundred years between the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the coming of the Christ child in Bethlehem.

Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of

hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. Malachi 3:8-10

God told them to bring the tithes to His house. The house of God was not always the same. For a time it was the altar. For a time it was the tabernacle. For a time it was the temple. For a time it was a place called the tent meeting. Wherever the house of God was, that was where the tithes were to be brought.

7. The New Testament age. I am going to skip this era for now and cover it later in this chapter.

8. The millennium.

And the first of all the firstfruits of all things, and every oblation of all, of every sort of your oblations, shall be the priest's: ye shall also give unto the priest the first of your dough, that ye may cause the blessing to rest in thine house. Ezekiel 44:30

...and the Sanctuary of the Lord shall be in the midst thereof. It shall be for the priests... Ezekiel 48:10c, 11a

The last part of Ezekiel deals with the rebuilding of the house of God in the kingdom age, or millennium. We will bring the tithes in the millennium to the priest. The priest was at the sanctuary of the house of God.

That takes the Jewish people all the way from the patriarchs in Genesis, into the New Jerusalem. We have found that in every era they brought the tithes to whatever was called the house of God at that time. First it was the altar, then it was the house of God, then it was the tabernacle, then it was the tent meeting, then it was the temple, and in the millennium it will be called the sanctuary of the house of God.

Do you think that God would require His people in all seven of those eras to bring the tithes to His house and then change His mind in one New Testament era? God said, **I am the Lord thy God, I change not.** The Bible says, **in whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.** The Bible says, **Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever.** Consider...

... If He wanted Jacob to bring his tithes to the house of God ...

... If He wanted the Jews in the wilderness to bring their tithes to the house of God...

... If He wanted the Israelites in Judges to bring their tithes to the house of God...

... If He wanted the Jews under the kings to bring their tithes to the house of God...

... If He wanted the Israelites when they returned from captivity to bring their tithes to the house of God...

... If He wanted the Israelites during that silent period of four hundred years to bring their tithes to the house of God...

... If He wants us in the millennium to bring our tithes to the house of God...

... Would you not think that He would also want us to bring our tithes in this age to the house of God?

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgement, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Matthew 23:23

*Jesus said that tithing was not as important as mercy, judgement, and faith, but He said we still ought to do it. He said, **these ought ye to have done.** Tithing is a New Testament principle. That is the only place Jesus*

ever spoke about tithing, but Jesus did not have to say something twice to make it true. Jesus said we ought to tithe.

Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. I Corinthians 16:2

This Scripture teaches proportionate giving. We are supposed to give according as God has prospered us. If one person makes more money than another, he is to give more money. The storehouse is the name used here for the house of God. God always wants His people to bring the tithes to the house of God.

But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God. I Timothy 3:15

The house of God today is the church. The church is a called-out assembly. When God's people meet on the Lord's Day, that is a church. Anywhere that a called-out assembly meets, that is the house of God. Throughout history God always commanded His people to bring the tithes to the house of God.

In the patriarchal days it was the altar. In Exodus 25 it became the tabernacle. With David and Solomon, it became the temple. In the land of Canaan, it became the tent meeting and later the rebuilt temple. In the millennium it will again become the rebuilt temple. In this age, the house of God is the called-out assembly. Every Sunday God's people are supposed to take the first tenth of their income to the house of God. The house of God is the church.

When God said, ye have robbed me in tithes and offering, what did He mean? One tenth of our income is already God's. If we do not put it in the church, we are robbing God. If we make a vow to a building program, or vow to give God more than the ten percent, as soon as we make that vow, the amount of that vow becomes God's just like the ten percent. We are robbing God if we do not give Him what is already His.

Ananias and Sapphira were killed because they had promised God that they were going to give Him the selling price of some property. Barnabas had done the same thing. He had sold a piece of property and had given all the profit to God. They sold their property, but did not give it all to God as they had vowed.

Let me go a step further. If you surrender your life to full-time Christian service, your life becomes God's. You vowed your life to serve God full time. Vows were very sacred in the Old Testament. At the moment that vow is made, it becomes just as sacred as the tithes.

God will not allow us to live on more than ninety per cent of our income. A tenth of it belongs to God. If you make a million dollars a month, a hundred thousand dollars is supposed to go to the church. You have no right to divide it up and designate it as you choose. You are to give it to the regular offering of the church. There is nothing wrong with giving designated gifts, if they are over and above the tithes. There is no place in the Bible where any Christian designated the tithe. They brought it to the house of God, and the house of God disbursed it.

When I was ten years old, I got a newspaper route for the Dallas Morning News. I had about thirty-five customers and made about three dollars a week. I thank God that when I got those first three dollars, my mother said, "All of that money is not yours." She took out three dimes and said, "That belongs to God."

I said, "Why?"

She said, "Because we live on God's earth, drink God's water, enjoy God's sunshine, and breathe God's air. That is rent."

Through the years there has not been one dime I have ever made, without a penny of it going to the Lord, by way of the church (the house of God for this day).

Chapter Twenty-Eight

The Task of the Church

And Abraham was old, and well stricken in age: and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things. And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh: And I will make thee swear by the LORD, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my sons of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell: But thos shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac. Genesis 24:1-4

And the servant took ten camels of the camels of his master, and departed; for all the goods of his master were in his hand: and he arose, and went to Mesopotamia, unto the city of Nahor. And he made his camels to kneel down without the city by a well of water at the time of the evening, even the time that women go out to draw water. And he said, O LORD God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham. Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water: and let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitches, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she said, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink, also” let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master. And it came to pass, before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham’s brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder. And the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her: and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up. And the servant ran to meet her, and said, Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher. And she said, Drink, my lord: and she hasted, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink. And when she had done giving him drink, she said, I will draw water for thy camels also, until they have done drinking. Genesis 24:10-19

Abraham told his servant to go to the far country of Mesopotamia to choose a wife for his son, Isaac. He had to go several hundred miles away and find the woman who was to be the bride of Isaac. Notice what the servant did.

The servant got on his knees and asked God to help him find the one who was to be the wife of his master’s son. In those days, ladies came down to get the water. They brought bottles made of skins, filled them with water, and carried them back on their heads. He was going to ask the women coming for water to give him a drink of water. If one offered water to his ten camels as well, she would be the one who was to be the bride of Isaac. A camel drinks an enormous amount of water, so the lady would have to go down to the well repeatedly in order to get enough water for all of his camels. That was to be the way God showed the servant the right bride for his master’s son.

When the servant found her, he took out earrings and gave them to Rebekah. He also gave her two bracelets and talked her into coming back and marrying Isaac, sight unseen.

In this story, Abraham is a type of God the Father. The eldest servant is a type of the Holy Spirit. The wife is a type of all Christians. Isaac is a type of Jesus. The far country, Abraham’s home land, is a type of the world.

The Heavenly Father told the Holy Spirit to go to the world and get a bride for His Son. Everything the Holy Spirit is commissioned to do in this age, is wrapped around getting a bride. The Holy Spirit gives us gifts, but the gifts are to help us get the bride. The Holy Spirit gives us the fruit of the Spirit, but the fruit of the Spirit is to help us get the bride. The Holy Spirit comforts us, so we can be comforted while we get people saved. The Holy Spirit strengthens us, so we can get people saved.

The job of a Christian is soul winning. The consuming passion for God’s people should be to get people saved. Jesus went to a great effort to get people saved. The Son of Man came to seek and save that which was

lost.

Charismatic people often make a drastic mistake. They get more concerned about the comforting than they do about the purpose of the comforting. They get more concerned about getting the gifts than they are about getting the bride. Every child of God is supposed to get people saved. That is the purpose of our existence. That is why we have the church. That is to be the purpose of every ministry of the church. Everything we do is to be wrapped up around getting the bride.

The servant gave her a bracelet and earrings. When the Holy Spirit chooses a bride for Jesus, the first thing is to tell them how to be saved. That is the earrings. The next thing is for them to reach out and accept it by faith. That is the bracelet. A person is saved by hearing and then taking.

In the Old Testament days, when priests were anointed, oil was placed on the lobe of the right ear, on the thumb of the right hand, and on the big toe of the right foot. The progression goes from hearing the Gospel, to taking the Gospel, to spreading the Gospel.

The servant was nice, courteous, and friendly. We should do the same, but our master did not tell us to go to the far country and be friendly. He said to go to the far country and get a bride. Being friendly is a tool to get the bride. We must talk people into marrying somebody they have never seen.

In the Bible, we have what we call **the fruit of the Spirit**. Here is where Charismatic people get confused. They get the fruit of the Spirit mixed up with the getting of the bride. They forget that the purpose of the fruit of the Spirit is to help us in getting the bride. They make the possession of these fruits an end in and of itself, rather than the means to the end of getting a bride. We are supposed to be kind in order to get the bride.

Some people like to talk about love, yet never or seldom win souls to Christ. They are unfaithful servants. God did not send them to the world to smile and be happy. God told them to be loving, kind, peaceful, gracious and gentle in order to win more souls. The fruit of the Spirit is simply a soul winning tool. It is a course on how to get the bride.

Every gift of the Spirit is given for that one purpose. If I talk in tongues and do not get the bride, I am an unfaithful servant. If I heal forty people from thyroid trouble, and cast out thirty tumors, but do not get the bride, I am an unfaithful servant. No matter how much we get the gifts of the Spirit, if we are not winning souls, we are unfaithful servants. The Holy Spirit came to this world to get a bride for Jesus. That bride is to be composed of all believers at the rapture who will be married to Him. The purpose of the fullness of the Holy Spirit is to get the bride.

The servant did not talk about himself. The servant talked about the son. When you get the Holy Spirit, you love Jesus more. That is His purpose. The Holy Spirit's purpose is not to be magnified, but to magnify Jesus. The servant praised his master and praised the master's son.

When Rebekah agreed to go with the servant, it was a picture of people accepting Jesus Christ as their Savior. They like her are agreeing to marry someone they have never seen. The purpose of every church in America is to get the bride for Jesus. I do not care how rich a church is, how many missionaries it sends out, or how much Bible the people know, if it is not getting people saved, it is not right with God, and is not doing what it is here to do. The one purpose for the servant going to the far country was to get the bride.

I have more respect for a hard-boiled fundamental soul-winner than I do for a sweet and kind compromiser. Being nice is important, but not as important as getting the bride. I would rather see a person do right wrongly, than wrong rightly. I would rather see a person have the right position and the wrong disposition, than to have the right disposition and the wrong position. The reason he sent the servant was to get the bride.

The Charismatic movement is popular because it is built around the gifts and the fruit of the Spirit, but not on the purpose of the Spirit. It is built around the tools to get the bride and not on the getting of the bride. The job of the servant is to get the bride. Without the servant, we are in trouble. The father sent the servant, just like the Holy Spirit was sent by the Heavenly Father, to find a bride for the son.

Rebekah had a long journey ahead. They were going to go through some pretty dangerous and lonely places. Rebekah did not know the way to the son, but the servant did. His job was to lead her safely to the bridegroom. He knew every spot between them and the son. The secret was for her to follow and obey him.

That is what we must do to be happy as Christians. Between the time that we receive Christ as Saviour, and the time when we meet Him face to face, we must allow the Holy Spirit to lead us and to tell us what we ought to do.

Imagine the journey Rebekah took in order to get to Isaac. Sometimes the journey went down into the valley and was foggy and dangerous. The secret was to follow the servant. Sometimes they had battles. Sometimes wild animals came. Often they could hear the hissing of serpents. Her only hope was to follow the servant. His job was to get the bride safely to the bridegroom. Sometimes the journey was straight.

We do not know the journey to Heaven God wants us to take. We must simply follow the Holy Spirit.

One day, they got close. Isaac had come out to kneel and pray, and they got a glimpse of him. When they got close enough, the servant introduced her to Isaac, his master's son. The Bible says Isaac took her to his tent. What happened to the servant? He drifted away into the shadows because his job was done. It was his job to get the bride for the groom.

That is my job. The Holy Spirit lives and dwells in me, so it is my job to get the bride for the groom. For these many years, I have spent my life trying to get the bride to the groom. At the rapture, all the people I have won to Christ will get their first glimpse of Jesus, and I will get to see them meet the one I told them about.

It will be worth it all, when we see Jesus.

Life's trials will seem so small, when we see Christ.

One glimpse of His dear face, all sorrow will erase.

So bravely run the race till we see Christ.

The tragedy is that many of the churches in America today have either forgotten the servant altogether or misinterpreted the purpose of the servant. Most Christians do not understand the purpose of the Holy Spirit. I believe in the fullness of the Holy Spirit, but the reason I believe in the fullness of the Holy Spirit is to get the bride for the Groom. I believe in the fruit of the Spirit, but all of those are simply tools to go soul winning. I believe in the gifts of the Spirit, but the gifts of the Spirit are simply ways to get the bride.

The earrings and bracelets were simply tools to get her. We ought to teach our children to be kind to one another. Why? Because the kinder they are, the more souls they can win. We should have love because the more love we have the more folks we can get to the Saviour.

Ours is an impossible task, humanly speaking. How can I possibly convince somebody who has never seen Jesus to put his faith in Him! The servant does it with love and with the gifts. Many go to church to shout, not to see people saved. My Bible says they that sow in tears shall reap in joy. You do not sow in joy, you sow in tears. They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.

She goes to Isaac, and the servant steps back into the shadows. The joy of getting the groom and the bride together is all the servant needs. That is the job of the Holy Spirit, and that is the job of the church.

Chapter Twenty-Nine

A Shrewd Way the Devil Takes Over a Church

To every thing there is a season, a time to every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace. Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

Every one of these things mentioned is neither good or bad. All of these things can be bad and all of these things can be good. In this is the secret to success and happiness in life.

If you want to build a great church, or if you want to have a happy life, do not do the same thing all the time, but do the same things all the time. You will never find a more important philosophical statement than that.

Monotony is both depressing and exhilarating. If you are monotonous in doing the same thing all the time, you will become depressed. If you are monotonous in doing the same things all the time, you will find it exhilarating.

Life is that way. You cannot live on a peak all the time. You must come down into the valley. The valleys are just as important as the peaks. A church needs to have services where the people shout and praise God. It also needs to have services where the people are still and know that He is God. Taking the Lord's Supper in quietness and sweetness is just as important as shouting and praising God.

I sometimes preach on Sunday mornings on comfort because people must be comforted. You cannot compare a sermon on comfort with a sermon on praise and rejoicing. You cannot compare either of those with a Bible study.

The same applies to Bible truth. This is how churches start teaching false doctrine. A pastor finds a truth in the Bible that the people have never heard. The people think that it was wonderful, so he has obligated himself to find a deeper truth the next time. Before long he is finding things in the Bible that are not there because he is trying to find something new and fresh all the time.

I will not build a church that way. I will build a church on the solid basics of the Bible. The same thing that builds families, builds churches. The basics. The way you stay healthy is by eating the basics.

There are churches that have to find something shocking as far as the truth is concerned. After a while they are spending all of their time trying to force types and truths that are not really there. If they do not continue to find new and more shocking truth, the feeling or effectiveness begins to wear off.

You cannot build a church, a life, a family, or a relationship on one thing all of the time. God is a God of variety. That is one thing wrong with rock music. Rock music is not a music of variety. It uses the same beat over and over again. Good music is a variety of music in one song. Churches are destroyed because they go down a good road, but only down that one road. They are destroyed by the continuous repetition of something that is good.

Some churches are destroyed by spectacular events. You cannot have a big day every Sunday and you cannot build on the spectacular.

A church should never get off onto any one thing. For example, we had 5,195 people saved on a Sunday. That is not going to happen every Sunday. There must be times when we study the Bible. Every Sunday cannot be a big Sunday.

The same thing is true in a family. There are times you should take the children for ice cream and times

you must make them eat their spinach. There are times to go to the park and swing, and times to bend them over your knee and spank them. There must be a balance of good things.

Jesus told Timothy to preach the Word. Many people believe that is all we are ever supposed to do, but that is not all it says. It also says to rebuke, reprove, and exhort. There are four things mentioned, and preaching the Word is just one of them. God is saying that sometimes the pastor needs to teach the Bible verse by verse. Other times the pastor needs to exhort as to how to live. Sometimes the pastor is to preach the Devil out of us. That is what a church needs. Churches will self-destruct when they get wrapped up in only one thing.

I am a very happy man. I live by the same schedule every week. It is not monotonous. Doing one thing all the time is monotonous, but doing several things all the time is not monotonous. I do not have to go on vacation to be happy. I do not need a hobby for a diversion. The truth is I live on vacation all the time. Vacation is a change or a diversion.

The professional golfer golfs for a living, but plays tennis for vacation. The professional tennis player plays tennis for a living and golfs for a vacation. My whole life is one diversion after another. That is why I am happy and can preach several times a day. I live a life of diversion. I do many things all the time, but not the same thing all the time.

The Bible says there is a time to love and a time to hate. So we need to love a while and hate a while. Billy Sunday said, "You cannot love flowers if you do not hate weeds." A doctor cannot love health if he does not hate germs. There must be times when the pastor praises God for His wonderful love, but there must also be times when he preaches against the dirty liquor traffic; against the wickedness in Hollywood, etc..

All over the country there are people gathering in living rooms for cottage prayer meetings and Bible studies. They have no evangelism, they have no invitation, they are not getting anybody baptized, and they have no house-to-house soul winning, street preaching, or passing out of tracts. They just go deeper and deeper in the Word until they are teaching things that God does not even know. They are destroying a church by seeking truth.

There are churches that take all their time to be still and know that He is God.

There are preachers who get off into casting out demons, and the people begin to come to church expecting to see the spectacular. If the spectacular does not happen, they quit coming.

I know churches that are one issue-oriented. They will get on an issue and stay on it for six months or more at a time. Every sermon and Bible study is wrapped around that issue. That is why I seldom use spectacular sermon titles. Everything about the Bible is spectacular. I want to build in my people a desire for the basics of the Bible, not just the spectacular.

It is tragic when a church calls a man to be their pastor after hearing him preach only one Sunday, because they fail to discover if he is an issue oriented preacher. Before calling a pastor, the church should get the man's tapes and find out if his preaching over an extended period of time is balanced. Somebody asked me who I thought was the greatest preacher in America. I would have to hear him preach for a year before I could answer that.

Let me make three observations.

1. Come expecting something, but do not come expecting any one thing.

2. Do not make anything be in competition with itself. I know people who get hooked on one food and just eat it all of the time. I know people who get hooked on one hobby and stay on that one hobby all of the time. There are too many things in life to enjoy. Sometimes you should go bowling, but sometimes you should just take a walk in the woods. Happy people are the diversified people. Live a varied life.

3. Do not go down just one road. Do not do the same thing, but do the same things.

Our preacher boys often go to a new church and for their first month there preach a series of sermons on women wearing pants. I do not mention women wearing pants all the time. I may go many months and never mention anything about women wearing pants.

My critics take one little phase of my ministry and talk about it as though that were the whole of it. Most of them have never set foot inside the buildings of First Baptist Church. If there is a church in the world that has a varied ministry, it is First Baptist Church of Hammond, Indiana. That is the way to keep a church healthy.

A college can get off onto a few doctrines. I believe the King James Bible was preserved word for word, but if I preached on that subject every week to the college students, I would destroy the college.

That is what the Devil does. The Devil comes to a church and gets the pastor and the people enraptured about one thing. My soul hungers for my church to be thrilled and excited when people get saved, but I also want to be able to sit at the Lord's Supper table with sincere praise and worship to Almighty God. There is a time for both. There is a time to laugh, and a time to cry, a time to plant, and a time to reap, a time to love, and a time to hate.

Churches all over this nation have gotten caught up in trying to find some new revelation from the Bible and destroyed themselves. People need a well rounded diet to be well rounded people. We need to stick to what the Bible says. The Bible says we are supposed to pray. The Bible says we are supposed to live a clean life. The Bible says we are supposed to read the Bible. The Bible says we are supposed to go soul winning. The Bible says we are supposed to walk with God. Often that does not satisfy us because we have gone down one road. That one road excites us until every time we meet we have to exceed where we went the last time.

In life it will not work, and in a church it will not work. It creates a church that only knows one thing and gives us only one phase of the ministry we are supposed to have to God. The Bible talks about ministering unto God. This is our purpose. God wants us to shout and praise Him. God wants us to spend some time quietly with Him and express to Him our love. God wants us to go out and tell people about Him and get them saved. God wants us to learn about Him from His book. That is what makes a great Christian, and that is what makes a great church.

Chapter Thirty

When the New Testament Church Started

And he goeth up upon a mountain, and calleth unto him whom he would: and they came unto him. And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, And to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils. And the multitude cometh together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread. And when his friends heard of it, they went out to lay hold on him: for they said, He is beside himself. Mark 3:13-15

This is where I think the New Testament church was started. Jesus was in the mountain and called to Himself those He wanted. This was the first called-out assembly by our Lord. There, He ordained the twelve to go out and spread the Gospel.

The church had to be founded sometime before Matthew 18 because it talks about the church. It also had to have been started before Acts 2 because the Bible says that they were adding to the church those that were being saved. You cannot add to something unless that something already exists.

Three things have distinguished the New Testament church down through the centuries since this time that Jesus called out these people.

1. Believer's baptism. Very few churches, other than Baptists, believe in salvation by grace, security of the believer, and baptizing only believers. Believer's baptism has been the issue that Baptists have fought for more than anything else through the years.

2. The independent congregation. No denominational boss has any scriptural right to tell a local New Testament church what to do, or to interfere with its business. It is difficult to even find a denomination that believes correctly on all of the important issues. All denominations interfere from the outside. They ordain preachers, and that is not the job of a denomination. The local church is supposed to ordain preachers. These denominations will also try to take away the credentials of those who do not follow their guidelines. That is control.

3. The doctrine of the local, visible church, not the doctrine of the universal church.

These are the things our forefathers fought for the most. They are also the things that I am fighting for across America. Somehow we must get back to placing the importance on these issues.

There are also other things that are important characteristics of a local New Testament church. Let me go into some detail on these.

1. It must be founded by Christ. Methodist churches were founded by John Wesley. Presbyterian churches were founded by John Calvin. Lutheran churches were founded by Martin Luther. Baptists are the only ones who can trace their origin all the way back to the time Christ first gathered together that called-out group on the hill.

2. There must be two ordinances. The Lord's Supper is a church ordinance and is supposed to be observed by a church. The ordinance of the Lord's Supper was started as a church ordinance. It always has been and it always will be an ordinance of the local church. It is a memorial supper when we gather and remember the blood and broken body of our Lord.

Baptism by immersion is the other ordinance. Nobody is a fundamentalist who sprinkles babies or adults.

3. You must have only two church offices. There is nothing in the bible about a Flower Committee. There is nothing in the Bible about a Music Committee. There is nothing in the Bible about a Board of Trustees. There are only two offices. One is pastor, or it is sometimes referred to as bishop or elder. The other office is that of deacons.

4. There is to be no outside control. No church can be a New Testament church unless it takes care of its own business with no interfering from the outside. A church cannot be a New Testament church who assigns the pastors. Any church that allows any outside control whether that control be good or bad is negating its right to be called a New Testament church.

5. It must have the proper order of membership.

Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. Acts 2:41

They baptized these converts the same day they were saved. Many churches criticize those of us who believe this way; yet it is a distinct characteristic of a New Testament church. They got baptized the same day, joined the church the same day, and began taking the Lord's Supper. This is the order for church membership: Salvation – Baptism – Church Membership – Lord's Supper. Any deviation from that order forfeits the right to be called a New Testament church.

And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believeth with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. Acts 8:36-38

Philip said that all the Ethiopian eunuch had to do to get baptized was to believe. He did not have to appear before a committee. He simply had to believe and he was able to be baptized on the spot. To be a New Testament church, you must baptize converts immediately.

6. The Bible is the final authority. No church is a New Testament church that does not believe in the verbal inspiration of the Bible.

7. Soul winning is essential. You cannot have a New Testament church and not be a soul-winning church.

The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches. Revelation 1:20

A golden candlestick is another word for a church.

Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works: Revelation 2:5a

The first works Jesus told the New Testament church to do was to go soul winning. Jesus was telling this church that if they did not get back to soul winning. He was going to remove their right to be called a church. That is the church's first and foremost responsibility. The church is not a social club. It is a soul-winning station. The New Testament church was hated by Jerusalem and was persecuted because they were soul winning. There is no such thing as a church that is not a soul-winning church. You may call it a church, but it is not a church. Jesus does not recognize any church as a church unless it is a soul-winning church.

8. Salvation is by grace through faith only.

9. Biblical separation. No organization that is not Biblically separated is a church. Our founding fathers were separated people. They were persecuted, hated, and fanatical people. There are three areas in which we are to separate ourselves.

In the Old Testament, they could not plant two seeds together in the same mound; they could not plow with an ox and a donkey in the same garment. These things symbolize several areas of separation.

1. The Bible. The seed is the Word of God. We are not to yoke up with any denomination, church, meeting, fellowship, or endeavor that is wrong on the Bible. We are not to yoke up with people who do not believe the Bible is verbally inspired.

2. Salvation. A robe is the symbol of salvation. We are not to yoke up with people who are wrong on salvation. We are not to yoke up in any kind of meeting with people who are wrong on salvation.

3. The preacher. An ox is a symbol of a true preacher. The false preacher is symbolized by a donkey. We are so afraid of not being accepted. New Testament Christianity never has been accepted. New Testament Christianity never has been accepted. A big battle in fundamentalism in the next few years is mainly going to be the compromiser attacking the separatist. When one starts that battle, he moves outside the circumference of fundamentalism.

There are some wonderful Christian people who belong to churches that are not New Testament churches, but this issue is a big one. We must teach our people the importance of belonging to a true New Testament church.

Acts 20:28 says, Take heed therefore unto yourselves...to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. Jesus loved the New Testament church enough to purchase it with His own blood, so we ought to love it enough to belong to one that is a true New Testament church. God has formed the New Testament church as His unit of operation. It is His company; His squad; His platoon; His unit of battle; His unit of action; His base of fellowship. God organized it and wants His people to come out from among the false churches or any church that unites with the false churches.

I thank God that I belong to a New Testament church, the kind that has fought to exist through the years, and the kind that Jesus founded.

Chapter Thirty-One

The Church and Education According to the Bible

It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: if we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us: If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself. Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers. Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. II Timothy 2:11-15

I want the First Baptist Church to be ready to stand when the battles come in the future. The battle will come concerning the schools. We are fortunate to live in the State of Indiana because we have had very few battles, but the battle is eventually going to come. Preachers all over this nation are going to face it.

The big battle is this: Is the school a part of the church?

The courts are going to have to decide whether or not education is worship. A church worship service cannot be licensed by a state. The question is whether or not education is worship. I am going to explain from the Bible that education is worship.

Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. John 4:21-24

Jesus said of His people that they knew what they worshipped. They learned what they worshipped because they were taught what they worshipped. This woman was a heathen worshipper and did not know what she was worshipping because all pagan worship is built on ignorance. All true worship is built on knowledge. Knowledge is education. To get knowledge you must have a teacher and a student. Consequently, true worship is based on knowledge. False worship is based on ignorance. The most ignorant and primitive places in the world worship heathen, pagan gods because they know not what they worship.

Truth is education. Jesus said that we are not to worship Him ignorantly, but in spirit and in truth. Truth must be transferred. People who know the truth have been taught the truth. If you have not been taught the truth, you cannot worship God. Jesus said *I am the way, the truth, and the life*. You must be taught the truth, so real worship is based on being taught. I worship Him in truth because I was taught truth as a child. If our next generation worships God in truth, they will do so because they are taught the truth. You get error by accident, but you get truth on purpose.

You cannot worship God ignorantly. You must worship Him in truth. Truth must be conveyed. Truth must have a teacher and a pupil and a truth being conveyed from one to the other.

If Jesus is the truth and we are supposed to worship God in spirit and in truth, then mathematics, history, geography, science, and languages are all truth. If Jesus is the truth, then God's people should be in search constantly of all truth, including these things.

And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sitteth in thine house, and when thou walkest by

the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. Deuteronomy 6:6

We are commanded to talk about Him when we walk by the way, when we lie down, and when we rise up. That means that we are to teach our children the truth every day, not just one day a week. Our government, judges, and many state legislatures say that we worship only on Sunday morning, so they will not license Sunday morning worship. The Bible says that we must know the truth before we can worship, and we are to teach the truth to young people every day. That means that God told us not to confine teaching the truth to Sunday.

Let me give you some observations.

1. God must be worshipped in truth. The average person goes to church on Sunday without thinking about God all week. He takes one little hour to hear a few dead songs and a sermonette by a gown-wearing preacher. That is called worship. The Bible says we are to spend every day learning who He is, what He is, and where He is.

You cannot learn about God unless you know mathematics, because God is truth. You cannot learn about God unless you know history, because history is truth and God is truth. True worship must be built on truth. Truth is teaching. Teaching is education. If we teach our children at home seven days a week, we can come to church on Sunday morning and worship the true and the living God in spirit and in truth, because we spend all week teaching them truth and Sunday worshipping in truth.

2. Truth must come before true worship. You cannot worship God ignorantly. The Bible says that they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth.

3. Truth comes by learning, which is education.

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children. Hosea 4:6

People are destroyed because of a lack of knowledge. Children do not get the truth in the public schools. One of these days America is going to be enslaved because we do not know the truth. The Christian school movement in America is facing the fight of its life in the not too distant future. Churches like First Baptist Church of Hammond will have to lead the fight. Most denominational and inter-denominational churches will allow their schools to be licensed.

4. Education is preparation for true worship.

5. Worship not based on truth is false worship.

Ye are of your father the Devil, and the lust of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. John 8:44

Satan is the father of lies. He is also the father of ignorance? Jesus is the truth. The Devil abides not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Truth comes through proper education. Truth is conveyed from one person who knows it to a person who does not know it. There was a day when I did not know that two plus two equals four. I learned that from a teacher, and now I know that truth. It is important to know that truth because

it is mathematics and God is a God of mathematics. Christian education is better than public education because it is based on truth.

6. All worship is of God or Satan. You either worship the true and living God or you worship the Devil. There is no other ground. If you worship the truth, you worship God. If you worship a lie, or error, you worship the Devil. That means the liberal people worship the Devil because they educate their children at the feet of error rather than truth... If they do not believe that Jesus is God's Son, they worship the Devil. If they do not believe that Jesus is virgin born, they worship the Devil. If they do not believe the Bible is the Word of God, they worship the Devil. You either worship in truth, the Living God, or in error, the Devil.

7. Education is a part of worship. I would like to plead this in court and take this before the Supreme Court. There is no true education without the fear of God. I am talking about science. I am talking about history that honors the father of our country. All truth is a part of God, whether it be mathematical truth, Bible truth, historical truth, language truth, or geography truth. God is the One Who made the universe, so to understand the universe we must understand God. If we do not know the truth, we cannot worship God. If we love God and want to worship God, we ought to be interested in all of His creation. The Bible says that the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth His handiwork. We cannot know God unless we look at His heaven and consider the work of His hands. God speaks to us through the heavens, so education is worship.

8. In the Bible worship was not limited to Sundays. Acts 5:42 says that they taught the truth daily in the temple and in every house. Our government is trying to confine it to a little one-hour period of worship. They try to tell us what worship is, yet they do not even know God. It is going to take more than thirty minutes a week to learn to know all the truth God has for us to learn. When we educate our own children, we are preparing them for worship.

9. To say that a church should not teach math, history, etc. is to say that God has no interest in those subjects. God does have an interest in history. God does have an interest in math. God does have an interest in language. God does have an interest in geography. He is truth, and all truth is a part of God.

10. This is the way America was at first. The public school system was not the way America started. It was an afterthought. The educational system of the United States of America was started by the churches, and that is where it should be. Churches should educate their own. It is not the government's job to educate. The school system of America was founded by the church. That is our heritage and that is the way it should still be.

Let me give you another view.

1. We worship a teacher.

There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: John 3:1, 2a

Go 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

2. We are to teach what He taught. Jesus, our teacher, goes back to Heaven and commissions us to teach what He taught. I am commanded by Jesus to teach what he taught. The reason I teach what He taught is so I can properly worship.

3. If He commanded me to do it, what right does the State have to give me permission? I have already been commanded by Him to do it, so I do not need permission from the government. It is not the state's business to give us permission to worship. Nobody in the state says they will try to license our worship service, but they will try to license our school. The school is where we teach the truth necessary for worship.

Let me tell you what is going on.

1. The state is trying to limit worship to Sunday.

2. Some states are trying to limit worship to Sunday morning.

3. Some states are even to what they call sanctuary worship. In some states they are trying to prove that Sunday school must be licensed because it is not worship.

4. Only worship will not be controlled by the government. You cannot worship unless you know the truth, so we learn the truth in order to worship God. That makes the Christian school as much a part of worship as the Sunday morning service. It is an extension of what goes on then. It is as much a part of the church as the Sunday school.

5. Anything that is not called worship as they see worship, will be licensed. The day will come when we will be forced to decide whether or not we are going to allow the state to tell us what to do in our schools. John Bunyan was in the Bedford jail for twelve years because the state wanted to give him a license and he would not accept it.

When we refuse to accept their license they will try to approve our teachers. They will approve only teachers who meet their educational requirements, which will be worldly, godless, humanist courses taught at state universities.

I like what Moses said to Pharaoh. Pharaoh told him not to go, but to stay and worship in the land.

Moses told him that they were leaving and going to Canaan.

Pharaoh said not to go very far away.

Moses told him that they were going all the way to Canaan.

Pharaoh told him to at least leave the children there because it might be dangerous out in the wilderness.

Moses told him that everybody was going to go.

Pharaoh suggested that they leave the cattle there.

Moses told him that not one hoof would be left!

The state is going to tell us that we have to be licenses. When we fight it, this is what they will do to try to get us to compromise. We must be determined not to allow one hoof to be placed under the control of the state!

1. Hire state approved teachers. No, we will not do this.

2. Christian Schools can appoint an accreditation board of their own. The idea is not who licenses or accredits you, the idea is any outside accreditation. The local church is an indigenous, autonomous, independent institution. A group of preachers have no more to tell us how to operate our Christian schools than a group of congressmen do!

3. Send us a list of your teachers. Even this is too much control because it is NONE of the

government's business who teaches in our Sunday school or in our daily school.

The battleground of the near future will be whether or not education is a part of our worship. The Bible says education is necessary to worship. In order to worship properly on Sunday, we must teach our children the truth every day. The truth is what makes me free and the truth is what makes me worship God, for they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.

Chapter Thirty-Two

Why Biblically the State Cannot Control the Church

Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk. And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men. Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not? But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny. And he said unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Cesar's; and unto God the things that are God's. When they had heard these words, they marveled, and left him, and went their way. Matthew 22:15-22

Human law was begun of necessity. Men had to protect three things.

- 1) **their person**
- 2) **their property**
- 3) **their freedom**

Government was started for those three things. Government was founded to be a servant of the people. The state has the authority to control only whatever threatens one of these three things. The state, however, has often become the agency that takes away our person, property, and freedom. Now, we must be protected from that which was made to protect us.

There are different powers. When the Bible says that we are to be subject to the higher powers, it is not suggesting that we be subject to just one of them. It is saying that we are to be subject to all the higher powers. We are to obey the higher powers in the proper proportion of their power. Our first allegiance is to God. Our second allegiance is to our country, then to our state, our country, and our city. They are all higher powers, but they are not equal powers.

God was here first, so He established the first laws. Any law that a nation makes that contradicts God's law is wrong and does not have to be obeyed. Our first allegiance is to be to the highest power. God has the first right to our person, our property, and our freedom.

I want to make three observations.

1. Caesar has no right to put his image or superscription of ownership on anything that belongs to God.

God created the heavens and the earth. So God has the right to choose what He wants. Consequently, that which belongs to God is totally outside of the rights of Caesar or the state. The state has no power whatsoever to put its stamp of ownership on what belongs to God.

(1) The church belongs to God. Caesar has no right to put any stamp of approval upon a church, because the church belongs to God. The church is a part of another kingdom. In Acts 20:28, Paul told the Ephesians elders to take heed that they feed the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. Jesus purchased the church, so it belongs to Him and not the state. He has first rights. That means that the nation, the state, the county and the city have no right to give anything the right to exist that belongs to God. God already has established its right to exist.

Since the church belongs to God, the government has no right to require the church or any part of the church to have a permit or a license. A Christian school does not have to have permission from the government to exist. God's power supersedes the state's power. A preacher does not need to have a license from the state to preach. The church does not belong to the United States government. As long as a church is not endangering

anybody's person, property or freedom, the state has no power over it.

(2) The body belongs to God. Paul said that the body and the spirit belongs to God. I Corinthians 6:18 says that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit. We are bought with a price and we are to glorify God in our bodies. My body does not belong to the state. It belongs to God. The state has no right to tell my body what to do, unless it injures somebody else's body. As long as I am not endangering another's property, person or freedom, then the state has no authority, because that is the government's only intended purpose.

(3) The spirit belongs to God. The spirit is that which fellowships with God. My body is that which you see. My soul is that which fellowships with you. My spirit is that which fellowships with God. My spirit is God's. The state has no control over my spirit. I can worship God as I choose. This is not the state's business. I can worship God according to the dictates of my own conscience and as I see the word of God.

(4) The soul belongs to God. The soul is that with which we fellowship and learn. That means our minds belong to God, so the state is not supposed to educate us. God never intended for the state or the government to educate our young people. Before there ever was a nation, God owned our minds.

(5) The tithe belongs to God. Leviticus 27:30 says the tithe is the Lord's. God is supposed to get the first of your increase and of your income. Caesar cannot place his stamp of ownership on what belongs to God.

2. Caesar cannot tax what is God's. The church is financed by the tithes of God's people. The church should not be taxed, because it would be the tithe being taxed, and Leviticus 27:30 says, *the tithe is the Lord's*. The state has no right to tax the church, because the church is operated by the tithe, which is the Lord's. If the state taxes the church, the state is taxing God. That would be like the state of Indiana trying to tax the United States Government. The United States cannot tax God, because the inferior power cannot tax the superior power. Jehovah God is a higher power than the United States Government, so it has no right to tax the church.

3. Caesar cannot pass a law in conflict with God's. If a city passes a law that the Supreme Court does not like, it will not be a law. The Supreme Court of the United States can nullify a law passed by a city council because it is a higher power. The Supreme Court can also nullify a law passed by the state of Indiana or even one by the Congress of the United States. But the Supreme Court cannot nullify a law passed by Jehovah God. Consequently, a nation cannot pass a law in conflict with God's law. God's law came first.

A nation can pass no law conflicting with God's law. A state can pass no law conflicting with a nation's law. A city can pass no law conflicting with a state's law. If the city conflicts with the state, you should obey the state because the state is a higher power than the city. If a nation's law conflicts with God's law, we are to obey God because He is the higher power. We do not have a license to live above the law of the land, but whenever a law of God conflicts with the law of the land, God's law supercedes the law of the land.

4. We do not always have to obey man's laws.

Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. Romans 13:1,2

That word *subject* is a military word. In the military an individual is to obey according to the rank of the officer. The higher the rank, the more the priority there is to obey the order. Daniel prayed with his window open every day. They passed a law that he could not do that. Daniel kept on doing it because he was obeying the law of God instead of the law of man. We are to obey God, who has revealed His will in His Word. The

state has no right to pass a law that is in conflict with God's law. It is important to remember that it must be something that He has divinely commanded in His Word.

And when they had brought them, they set them before the council: and the high priest asked them, Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us. Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men. Acts 5:27-29

God's kingdom is superior to the United States of America. We have a right to go soul winning without the permission of the city council. We have permission from a bigger source than City Hall. As long as what we do not threaten another person's person, property, or freedom, we have the right and the obligation to obey the law of God over the law of man.

We are not of this world. Our kingdom is above this world. As we interact with this world, we must see to it that we submit ourselves to the laws, even if we do not agree with them, as long as they are not against the laws of God. Whenever one power conflicts with another power, our allegiance is to the highest of the two, which means whenever any power conflicts with God's laws, our allegiance is always supposed to be to God!

Chapter Thirty-Three

The Church and Government

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgement and with justice henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this. Isaiah 9:6, 7

When Jesus comes, all human government will rest upon His shoulder and will flow from His authority. Government will increase until the millennium comes, so the millennium will be the perfect time when all government is under Him. During the kingdom age, the throne in Jerusalem shall become all the government. All cities will get their right from the throne of David, from Jesus on the throne. At that time the government shall be upon His shoulder.

In Romans we have a prophecy concerning the deterioration of a civilization. It also describes the deterioration of the fundamental Gospel position before it is forsaken by God. Three times in the first chapter of Romans we find words like, God gave them up, or God gave them over. There comes a time in a country, in a civilization, or in a movement when God gives it up. I want you to notice the stages in this deterioration as they apply to fundamental churches.

1. They hold the truth, but they hold it in unrighteousness.

For the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness. Romans 1:18

The first step down for any great movement is when it loses its separation. Its doctrine is sound, but it is not separated from the world. I do not care what group, denomination, or movement it is, the first step down is losing its separation position. Many once great churches are no longer effective for God because they quit taking a stand on the matter of separation.

There was the day when Germany was basically a Christian nation. There was a day when England was the headquarters of fundamental Christianity in the world. There was a day when Chicago, Illinois, was the fundamental headquarters of the United States. What happened? They held truth, but they lost their position of separation. That began their downward slide. They began to live like the world, talk like the world, dress like the world, sing like the world, walk like the world, watch what the world watched, and go where the world went. The great soul-winning churches in history have been the greatest separated churches in history. Their first step down was when they lost their separation.

2. The lose their shout.

Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; Romans 1:21a

The Bible says that they glorified Him not as God. What does it mean? They lost their shout. The churches in America that have joy and excitement are usually separated. The quickest way to lose your joy in the Lord is to lose your desire to be separated.

3. They lose their gratitude to God.

The Bible says that we are to enter into His courts with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise. When we lose our praise, we will lose our thanksgiving. That is always the next step down.

4. Their foolish heart is darkened.

...but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Romans 1:21b

It does not say that their foolish mind was darkened. It was their foolish heart that was darkened. They still believe the Bible, but they lose their emotion. They lose their tears. It is sad that even in fundamental circles a separated and excited church is an unusual thing. Some of the deadest churches in America are independent Baptist churches. Why? They lose their separatist position. When you lose your distinctiveness, then you lose your shout, and your thankfulness, and your heart becomes darkened.

5. They begin to think that they are wise.

Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools. Romans 1:22

That is why our schools change. Usually that is the next thing that happens. We decide that we want our schools to become like the heathen schools that we once shunned. We want to use the same textbooks that they use. Man becomes wise and God becomes a fool.

6. They become humanistic.

And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie and worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Romans 1:23-25

That is humanism. Humanism is when a man thinks he knows more than the Bible. Humanism is when man becomes more important than God. Humanism is when man reasons with himself. That is what formal education often becomes. Nobody knows the truth, but we are all searching for it. That is what modern education teaches. They fight dogmatism and any kind of authority because they do not want to yield themselves to the authority of an omnipotent God.

7. They become immoral.

For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient. Romans 1:26-28

That term *reprobate* mind means that the mind has gone as rotten as it can go. It means that God has given it up. God will give up the civilization or movement that does not take a stand against immortality. Many churches no longer are a lighthouse for the Gospel because they have lost all semblance of righteousness and accepted the filth of this world. That is why some denominations that once stood for the truths of God's

Word now openly accepts the homosexual lifestyle.

8. They worship government.

The Bible says that they worshipped and served the creature more than the creator. This is interesting. They worshipped and served the creature. That is government. The last step in the decay is when we come to a point where we hold government in higher regard than we do God. Many churches once held the aim of pleasing God as their goal, but now are so busy trying to please the government that they no longer give God any authority. God, not government, is to be the final authority of the church.

With that in mind, let's consider the matter of authority as it deals with the church. Authority may be claimed by three sources.

1. By strength. When the conqueror conquers, he has authority over the conquered. That is the wrong way to get authority.

2. By surrender of the weak to the strong. Let me illustrate this. Lithuania never chose to be a part of Russia. Lithuania had no choice. Stalin and Russia got power over Lithuania by strength. Strength conquered weakness and that gave authority. In contrast, Texas was also a foreign country. Texas, by treaty, decided to enter into the Union, so Texas voluntarily entered into our country. Lithuania did not voluntarily enter into Russia.

3. Delegated by God. There are four areas where God has delegated authority.

(1) God has given authority to the family to rule itself. The Bible has given the husband the authority over the wife. The Bible also has given the parents the authority over the children. The little unit, called the family, has been given the right by God to rule itself.

(2) God has given authority to the local church to rule itself. The family has no right to rule the church. The church has no right to rule the family. The church has been given the authority by God to govern itself.

(3) God has given business the right to govern itself. Free enterprise is God's gift. Capitalism is God's gift. It is God's way.

(4) God has given authority to the State. When I refer to the state I am referring to Government as a whole. God has given to the state the authority to govern itself.

God gave the authority to each of these and none of them has a right to usurp that authority. They are not over each other. They are separate from each other. The state has no authority when a parent is obeying God by spanking his child because God has given the family the right to govern itself. God said to spank our children. That command has been given to the family. The state has no right to prevent the family from obeying commands given by God to the mom and dad.

The church has no right to control the state. The church has no right to control business. Each of these are separate entities.

The state has no right to control business. That is what is called the free enterprise system. That is America. When America was founded, the Government did not interfere with business. Business has a way of settling its own problems if it is left alone.

For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; He will save us. Isaiah 33:22

Every local church is supposed to govern itself. There is no great centralized church power. In America, our judges and politicians are basically not church-going people, so they do not understand the church. The state has no right to interfere with the way we serve our God.

There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another? James 4:12

A lawgiver is one who gives government the right to exist. A lawgiver is one who gives the home the right to govern itself. God is that lawgiver.

Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Romans 13:1

God gave the state the right to exist. God gave the home the right to exist. God gave the church the right to exist. All of these are ordained of God.

Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God. Romans 13:2a

If the state resists the power that God has given to the church, they are resisting God. The state is resisting God when it tries to run the home. There is nothing in this country more corrupt than the Welfare Department. They think they own our kids. God has given parents the right to own those kids.

When our son was in Junior High School, he brought home a book the school was requiring him to read. The name of the book was Of Mice and Men by Steinbeck. I told him to tell the teacher that he could not read the book. His teacher gave him a substitute book to read called, Catcher in the Rye. I told him that he could not read it either. The next day I went to the principal's office to inform him that my son was not going to read those books.

The principal had me meet with the English committee to come to a satisfactory resolution. I told that committee that my son was not going to read those books. That principal said something to me that I have never forgotten. He said, "Reverend Hyles, when your boy is in our school, he is no longer your boy."

Before I knew it, I was across his desk and had that principal by his collar. I said, "I do not care where he is, he is still my son, not yours!"

That is the attitude of the state. The issue is one kingdom trying to operate another kingdom. God has given each kingdom a right to exist independent of the others. God gives each of these institutions the right to exist.

God is the lawgiver. If the government gives these institutions the right to exist, then the government becomes the lawgiver and has taken the place of God. So, the government becomes an idol. God is the One who gives the right to the state. God puts up kings and sets down kings.

If any of these four rises up here to give any of the other four the right to exist, it becomes a lawgiver takes God's place. They make themselves an idol. Not only that, for us to submit to them, makes us idolaters.

If the government tries to get us to license the church, the government has moved itself where God is supposed to be, so a church that allows itself to be licensed by the state is idolatrous, because they have another god. It is not the state that gives the First Baptist Church the right to exist. It is God Who gives the First Baptist Church the right to exist.

We are to worship Him in spirit and in truth. Truth is education. If we do not educate and teach the

truth, we cannot worship. Truth must be taught, so we are to teach our people five days a week at our schools. The state has no power over the school, because the school is a part of our worship and a part of the church. If the state says that our schools must be licensed, it has usurped the place where God is supposed to be. The state becomes the lawgiver, giving us the right to exist. The state becomes an idol.

If you try to start a church in many communities in America, you will be told what street you must start it on, how big a sign you can have, and how many parking places you must have per pew. That is the state controlling the church.

God is the lawgiver who gives each of those areas the right to exist and the right not to interfere with any of the others. The state has no right to give a Christian college the right to exist. Many of our colleges are in trouble because they are not controlled by a church, which takes away its right to claim autonomous authority. They do not have the canopy of the local church. They have formed an empire, or a kingdom, outside the four kingdoms God ordained.

The First Baptist Church of Hammond and every other church should determine that no one will give us the right to exist. We already have our right to exist given to us by the one Lawgiver in the universe. So let us be free. It is a matter of being scriptural.

Books by Dr. Jack Hyles

Manuals

The Hyles Church Manual
The Hyles Sunday School Manual
The Hyles Visitation Manual
Jack Hyles Church Bus Handbook
How to Boost Your Church Attendance

Sermons

Let's Hear Jack Hyles
From Vapor to Floods
Kisses of Calvary
Hammond First Baptist Pulpit
Vol. 1 & 2
Hammond First Baptist Pulpit
Vol. 3 & 4
Hammond First Baptist Pulpit
Vol. 5 & 6

General Teaching

Blue Denim and Lace
Grace and Truth
Strength and Beauty
How to Rear Infants
How to Rear Children
How to Rear Teenagers
How to Treat Different Types
Of Church Members
How to Help People Reach
Their Potential
Jack Hyles on Justice
Meet the Holy Spirit

Teaching on Preaching
Exploring Prayer with Jack Hyles
Enemies to a Soul Winning Church
Jack Hyles' Favorite Soul-Winning
Experiences
Jack Hyles Speaks on Biblical
Separation
Salvation Is More Than Being Saved
Woman, the Completer
Let's Study the Revelation
The Story Behind the Psalms

Poetry

Please Pardon My Poetry
Reason with Rhyme
Poems for Special Occasions

Booklets

Let's Go Soul Winning
Seeing Him Who Is Invisible
Satan's Bid for Your Child
The Blood, the Book and the Body
I Am an Idea
Duty
Let's Baptize More Converts
Sex Education in the Public Schools
Jesus Had Short Hair