

Another Church - cont.

Compromise

Lack of clarity and loss of conviction soon lead to compromise. Distinctiveness is lost when the Lord's people want to mix the truth of God's word with the error of the world (Nehemiah 6:2). They must resist this at all cost!

Conformity

Lack of clarity, loss of conviction, and compromise soon lead to full-blown conformity. Distinctiveness is lost when the Lord's people join hands with the world and they cease to be the Lord's church (Romans 12:2; Ephesians 5:11; James 4:4).

As proof of this, today, among some Churches of Christ, there is found the social gospel, faith-only salvation, instrumental music, Christmas and Easter observed religiously, women preachers and elders, etc.

Just Another Church

Distinction makes a difference (Acts 17:6). It's what the Lord wants and what the world needs. Loss of distinctiveness means loss of dedication to Jesus. Let us all dare to be different and distinct! - *Chris Reeves*

Sentence Sermons

- Hearing or reading God's word is useless until it is obeyed.
- A true friend will tell you all the truth, all the time.
- People without goals seldom get anywhere.
- It doesn't take much talent to be a grumbler and complainer.
- Blessed are the poor in spirit.

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For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.
- 2 Corinthians 10:3-4 -

*But know that Jehovah hath set apart for himself him that is godly: Jehovah will hear when I call unto him
- Psalm 4:3 -*

Is the Lord's church today, the church belong to Christ, just another church or denomination? Is the church of Christ, made up of New Testament Christians, simply another group in the larger body known as "Christianity"? It may come to the surprise of some that Jesus intended his people to be distinct - distinct, not simply from non-Christian groups, but also distinct from those who claim to be Christians.

A Distinct People

Being a distinct people from the rest of the world is not a new idea. God wanted the nation of Israel to be distinctive, not just another nation (Leviticus 20:23,26). Yet, some Israelites did not want this (1 Samuel 8:5,20).

God also wanted his people in the New Testament to be distinctive, not just another religious group (1 Peter 1:16; 2:9). And, like the Israelites, some Christians did not want this (Revelations 2-3).

Today, God still wants his people to be distinct and not "just another church"! What does distinct mean? Distinct means, not the same, not identical, separate, different in nature or quality, dissimilar. Can Christians today actual be this and live this way? Yes!

The New Testament church has a distinctive savior and head - Jesus is divine, not just human (Acts 4:12; Colossians 1:18).

The New Testament church has a distinctive body - the church is singular, not divided (Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4).

The New Testament church has a distinctive doctrine - the New Testament is God's word, not man's word (Gal. 1:6-9; 2 Jn. 9-11).

The New Testament church has a distinctive purpose— to save souls, not to provide social functions (Ephesians 2:10; 1 Timothy 3:15).

The New Testament church has a distinctive living - separate from sin, not living in sin (1 Corinthians 1:2; 2 Corinthians 6:14 - 7:1).

The New Testament church has a distinctive destiny - either heaven or hell, but

not a man-made destiny like reincarnation or nirvana (Matthew 7:13-14; 25:46).

Friend, the Lord built his church to be distinctive (Matthew 15:13; 16:18). When the Lord's church loses its distinctiveness it ceases to be the Lord's church (Revelation 2:4-5; 3:1). It's just that simple. Let's examine now how the Lord's church can lose its distinctiveness.

Loss of Conviction

Distinctiveness is lost when the Lord's church stops standing for truth and starts accepting error (Ephesians 6:18) and when the Lord's church is made up of cowards (Galatians 4:16).

Loss of Clarity

The loss of conviction soon leads to lack of clarity. Distinctiveness is lost when the Lord's church stops preaching the clear, unequivocal message of the gospel (1 Corinthians 14:7-8), when it is uncertain about truth (John 8:32; 17:17), and when it presents its doctrine as "Church of Christ tradition" instead of truth.

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