

Words of Truth

Exposing The Community/Evangelical Church Movement (Part 3)

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One sure sign of a false teacher is that they make merchandise of their followers (II Peter 2:1-3). The Gospel is supposed to be preached (Romans 1:16), not sold as a product. Yet, false teachers have long realized that people want their ears tickled and they are certainly willing to do the job (Isaiah 30:9-11 and II Timothy 4:1-5). Worship is supposed to be about paying homage to God (Matthew 4:10 and Hebrews 12:28-29). Yet, false teachers have realized that people want worship to be about them rather than the Lord.

The Community Church Movement seeks to have people “feel good” about what they are doing. Then, they do not question whether or not their actions are pleasing to God. Folks, God has shown plainly that He will not excuse those who worship according to the doctrines of men (Mark 7:7-9). Before we get further into exposing this error, let’s see the proof of what is going on.

The Community Church Sells Their Errors Through Entertainment

Here is what is going on in the Community Church Movement: “Our High School Ministry is a great place to connect with friends and with God in a relaxed atmosphere. **Expect fun, worship with a live band, and a compelling message from someone really, really good looking** [okay, so maybe not that good looking, but the message will still be compelling]” (<http://www.dulleschurch.org/Ministries/Students/>). “We [Vista Community Church] **believe the Bible should never be boring, worship can be really loud,** and good leaders always care” (<http://www.riovistachurch.com/index.php/ministries/detail/C5/>).

“**Thee's, Thou's and Powdered Wigs? Not a chance.** Worship is real. It's authentic, and the definition of worship in its simplest form is a life that is surrendered to celebrating God in the good times and the bad. On Sunday mornings, we gather as a body of believers to celebrate who God is and because we are so excited about Him, **our worship is untamed, undignified, passionate, and raw.** We Are Not Perfect People! We are imperfect people who serve and celebrate a perfect, loving, and awesome Creator. When we focus on Jesus and truly worship Him from our hearts, His Spirit brings freedom, life, and joy. **Worship is fun! The songs played by our band are electric and upbeat,** deep and spiritual, reverent and worshipful. Before you know it, you'll realize that you're doing what you were born to do: connecting with God. **You will love it**” (<http://www.theriverishere.org/>)!

Worship Is For God Not What Pleases You!

You should have noticed some key words in the quotes above (i.e. “our worship”, “we”, “you”, etc.). The Community Church Movement is about pleasing people, not about pleasing God. The Scriptures speak of worship in a different manner than the Community Church Movement does. Notice what the

Lord says about worship to Him: *“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... For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh... Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men? Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh”* (John 4:23-24, Philippians 3:3, and Colossians 2:18-23).

When man becomes the standard of authority for worship bad things occur. Nadab and Abihu decided they would worship God their way and the Lord devoured them in fire (Leviticus 10:1-2, Numbers 3:4, and Numbers 26:61). When man worships in a manner that God does not command, He calls that evil. Notice: *“For the children of Judah have done evil in my sight, saith the LORD: they have set their abominations in the house which is called by my name, to pollute it. And they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart”* (Jeremiah 7:30-31). Obviously, the type of worship you might “love” is not what God loves! We have to find out what pleases God (Colossians 3:17).

How Can We Know What Pleases God?

The Scriptures fully equip us to do every good work (II Timothy 3:15-17, Deuteronomy 29:29, John 20:30-31, and II Peter 1:3). If you want to understand what pleases God, you simply must look to His word (Job 32:8 and Psalms 119:130). Where people err is when they decide to go beyond what God has written (I Corinthians 4:6). Sad thing is, the Bible is full of warnings not to add or remove from God’s word (Deuteronomy 4:2, Deuteronomy 12:32, Joshua 1:7-8, Proverbs 30:5-6, Matthew 28:18-20, Galatians 1:6-12, I Timothy 1:3-4, II Peter 3:16-17, II John 9, and Revelation 22:18-19).

Let me provide us with an example to show how we can find out what pleases God in worship. If I did not know what the Lord’s Supper was, I’d have to find the Scriptures that tell me. I’d find that Jesus instituted the Lord’s Supper using unleavened bread and fruit of the vine to be taken in remembrance of His death (Matthew 26:17-29). I’d find that He divided the fruit of the vine into multiple containers to be partaken of (Luke 22:16-20). I’d find that Christians observed the Lord’s Supper on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7-11) when they assembled together for a spiritual meal (I Corinthians 11:18-34). I’m a Christian, so I’d follow that example without any changes to what is authorized!

Conclusion

The Community Church Movement wants to remove God’s “Thee’s and Thou’s” for their “ours and yours”. Let’s be sure to hold to the old paths and walk therein (cf. Jeremiah 6:16). Truly, many shall entertain their way right into eternal damnation (II Thessalonians 1:7-9). Our next article will focus on the Community Church Movement’s two most known churches (Saddleback Church and Lakewood Church) and their leaders (Rick Warren and Joel Osteen).