

Buildings

It is important to return to the Bible in these things. Jesus came to earth and in 33 years he did not build himself a successful ministry (by today's wrong standards), nor did he leave a physical building for his disciples to continue in. There are Hindu gurus who have a following of thousands of people complete with shrines to them when they are only 10 years old. Does it not seem obvious that God's purposes and priorities are not on church buildings? Indeed the history of modern Christianity is lost on all of us today. Every time in church history churches (good people of God) mistake the physical building for the work of God, mistaking the building for the work of God, they forget about tending the sheep. In the end a greedy false prophet enters and all those years of tithes and offerings (heavy sacrificing) from these good people get shifted over into something that not serve or glorify God. (This is why the norm should be homegrown successors that study and grow up in that ministry and not in a Christian school elsewhere.)

1 Corinthians 3:9 *For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, **ye are God's building.** 16 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?*

Ephesians 2:20 *And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; 21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: 22 **In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.***

Churches need to heavily invest in ministers that serve God by serving God's people. This means that the focus, priority, and energies are on spiritually building up God's people so that they grow and serve (actually participate in God's work). Our television generation thinks watching is participating, and this is a tragedy. The correct emphasis has to be seen in (1) their growing understanding and obedience to God, (2) their constant service of God. God's purpose for us is to complete His work, which is to carry the gospel

to all the world, convince the unsaved of salvation, refute heresy, and to disciple the converts in a local church setting where they will carry on the work of God with us.

In **Matthew 25** the parable of the talents teaches that true believers always invest what is given¹ to them by God in serving the master. He that refuses to serve God and his brethren is simply unsaved, which will be revealed in the judgment. A second parable (**Mat. 25:31-46**) teaches us that all truly saved people will be active in serving their brethren and their physical needs because salvation and love of the Savior always without exception produces this in the redeemed. **1 Jn 3:14** indicate that it is a faithful mark of the believer that he loves his brethren in Christ. This love has been taken away in modern church structure and replaced by budgets, token and false replacements. (See also **James 2:14-18**)

This biblical focus has been replaced with being comfortable, not "risking" oneself by confronting the unsaved nor sin in the church ("*hard preaching against sin might cause our best tithers to be offended and stop or slow down giving*"). When did any preacher of God in the Bible ever slack off of attacking sin because of its consequences. John the Baptist was killed because of his rebuke of sin in the lives of civil authorities! The difficulty of evangelism, of getting out and talking, hassling with people who are decided but wrong is simply lost on a big church mentality. A pastor of a big church simply does not have "time" to evangelize personally. He is "above" that. That is the whole point of seeking this kind of super church mentality. They hire somebody to do that. Our modern focus is buildings that are pleasant to be in, cool in the summer, and warm in the winter. Monster buildings built as a monument to the man in the pulpit really. It is "his" work (not God's work). The thought that according to biblical prophecy, the antichrist will be having services there one day never occurs to anybody. God's money should be

¹ See our tract on Greed in <http://www.davidcox.com.mx/tracts>

put more into people, and less into brick and mortar. When the mentality that the building will bring in the people instead of our biblical position and doctrine, our evangelism, then the type of people that come will be unsaved or unspiritual or both, ruining the church. **2 Timothy 2:22** *But follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, **with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.***

Bodies

Success today has also been defined by the physical presence of people in the building. If this is success, then any way you can get them in is acceptable, and thus we see the programs that drive the local church. The whole idea of publicly rebuking the sinful practices of the people present simply cannot harmonize with our desire for crowds. Noah is an example of faithfulness without bodies, and he is included in the heroes of the faith in Hebrews 11:7. **Luke 6:26** *Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.* The point here is that **popularity is not a mark of a real man of God, but a mark of a false prophet!** Why is that? Because the man of God attacks sin and this ALWAYS has a bristling effect on the people. Although many true Christians will seek this type of ministry, they must carry the financial and service burdens among few because the many will not stomach such rebukes and demands as God truly places on us. **Acts 14:22** *Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that **we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.***

We have transformed Christianity into an easy, no-sacrifice type of thing that giving money can fix everything. Taking up our cross is lost. Sacrificing our lives, our embarrassment (by going out door to door witnessing, teaching or preaching publicly), and giving up income and comfort by serving God in the ministry has been replaced by club tactics (having a yard sale, participating in a parade, activities that seem to be doing God's work and keep us busy but isn't really God's work). "*Preach the word*" **2 Tim 4:2**; "*Ye shall be witnesses*" **Acts 1:8**; "*we are ambassadors for*

Christ... be ye reconciled to God" **2 Cor 5:20** are lost on this generation.

Bucks

One of the most important points we see in modern churches revealing the modern apostasy is the reversal of the teaching about riches. Instead of riches being the enemy of our soul (**1 Tim 6:10**) making it almost an impossibility for a rich person to enter heaven (**Mat. 19:23-24**), now rich people are the very backbone of modern churches, and these are the very ones modern preachers seek, court, and dedicate their ministries to (**James 2:1-7**). **Luke 14:33** So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple. **Luke 6:20** Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God. Paul instructed Titus to attack these concepts and false prophets who "subvert whole houses teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake" **Titus 1:11**.

Here we see the genius of God in designing things as He did. First of all a preacher should live of his own ministry (1 Cor 9), but a requirement for being a minister is that he be free from the vice of greed, seeking luxury, more than he should. **1 Peter 5:2-3** "Take the oversight (of the flock of God) 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." The point here is that God has made a system whereby the preacher has to be free from greed, being humble and not seeking luxury and riches, in order to even qualify, because he is the living example of godliness among the people of God. Change this to preachers who live the high life of luxury, and the people will follow his example. They do not like the idea of sacrifice of their hard earned money, so they seek to "invest" their tithes and offerings in things that are of immediate benefit to themselves (buildings and comforts). We hire people to witness, teach, preach, and do what we don't want to do because of our pride. We use our money to build our own church without any real sacrifice for advancing the work

of God around the world, giving a small amount to soothe our conscious on that account.

What kind of church is a "good church"?

A good church seeks to see spiritual growth and victories in its people by seeing them participate and personally sacrifice deeply for the work of the Lord. This is seen by them doing their own work and taking their tithes and offerings and giving a large part of it to foreign and home missions. This also is seen in a very frugal, restricted, and limited concept of church buildings, facilities, and programs. A good church understands that a shepherd cannot handle his spiritual chores once the number of sheep grow beyond a certain point, and prefers to start other churches, drawing other men of God into oversight positions independent of them and their control. In other words, they prefer many independent local churches instead of a personal empire built around them. This is the old denominational desire that founded the Roman Catholic Church. Indeed almost all modern Fundamental Baptist Churches that grow extremely large take on the exact characteristics of the Catholic Church, a pope at its head, arrogance in its position and treatment of its own people, crush all rebellion and discontent instead of honestly investigating why the problem exists, never accept doctrinal or conduct correction, minimize or destroy completely the priesthood of the believer and Christianity liberty, interpretation of Scripture limited to the "pope" and his cronies.

We see an overemphasis on the glorification of the church, what men are and do, and typically this manifests itself in praising men and their achievements, buildings that are basilicas, monuments to men not to God, and "artistic beauty" which takes the form of extreme art inside the church (idols), and music that is not a simple congregational hymn sung as a creed by the believer, but a glorious concerted orchestra that again praises human talent or exalts human feelings instead of God's accomplishments.

The 3Bs of Success

Revealing Modern Goals

By David Cox

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In our modern world, the church has unfortunately become like the world instead of having a godly influence in the world to restrain sin in the world. The church of our day has lost its "saltiness." The most disappointing part of this trend is to see what happens in the name of the Holy God of the heavens in modern churches. Money and fame has become the focus. Today the most important church employee is the church accountant! They are elevated to a "ministry" position and extremely well paid. We can do without a pianist, but not without a church accountant! The modern focus is in three areas, Bodies, Buildings, and Bucks. We can add boasting (fame and glory) here also. We are taught that a preacher is not important, and his ministry is insignificant before God and man if he does not have great success in these four areas. Foreign and strange is the idea of a humble man of God serving in a small backwater of America, where only faithfulness to God's call is important.