

The Americanized Church

The great reducer



DISCLAIMER:

Many will disagree with my opinions in this writing; some will consider these things for the very first time; still, a few might say, 'it's about time, what took you so long?' That being said, if I was to write everything I thought on the subject of the Church, this article might look more like a 1000 page thesis than a friendly article of my "opinion," so, I will refrain from that and just give you the cold, hard facts as I see them.

Just consider

The Americanized Church

IT'S a bona fide phenomenon. There's one on almost every corner in America, yet as a whole the Churches in America are ineffective. Most all of them were started on the premise of the Biblical model of Church. But in reality, our similarities are swallowed up by our differences, unity is impossible and effectiveness is, for all intents and purposes, stunted at best. Still, Churches are like grocery stores. While they may be in different places in the country, you can still find the eggs in the same place in the store. I don't necessarily want to focus on buildings and organizations that we 'call' the Church, but rather, I'd like to make a clear distinction between the Church in America and the 'TRUE' Church which is located throughout the whole world, and of whom Jesus said, "and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Matt. 16:18) For the purposes of this article, I want to make it crystal clear that there is a **BIG** difference between the TRUE CHURCH, and the *Americanized Church*.

Forgotten WHO we are?

How BIG is the 'true' Church?

In the Bible (which is what we should pattern everything we do by, not to mention how we should do 'church.') there are clear Scriptures that instruct us as to how the Church should be, for lack of a better term, **RUN**. Namely, 1 Tim. chapter 3, Titus 1, Eph. 4, 1 Cor. 12 & 14, and more. The Church has been commissioned by Jesus -God Himself for some very lofty goals. For example, Jesus told the disciples to 'go' into all the world and make disciples, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you..." (Matt. 28:19) WE, as the Church, carry the key to ETERNAL LIFE in this message of the GOSPEL! In regard to how "big" the True Church is, please understand I'm not referring to numbers, but rather our authority in the Spiritual realm...it's big, really big! Here are just a few points to consider:

*In 2 Cor. 5:20 We (as the Church) are told that we are HIS AMBASSADORS to the whole world! We represent God Most High and carry the full weight of His Kingdom authority as His Ambassadors, and Ministers of Reconciliation!!!

*We, as the Church are children of God! (1 Jn. 2 & 3) God is our Father! We are joint heirs with JESUS HIMSELF! (Romans 8:14-17)

*We, as the Church, are the BODY OF CHRIST, the BODY of CHRIST!!! (1 Cor. 12:27) We have one head to whom we listen and obey, and His name is JESUS!

*Every individual member of this body has been given spiritual gifts and good works to walk in (1 Cor. 12, 14; Eph. 2:10.) And just when you think it can't get any better,

*Each member of the BODY of CHRIST is individually the TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT!!! (1 Cor. 6:19) NO WAY! YES, WAY! We, as the Church, are each the 'living, walking, breathing Temple of God' on this earth!!! IT'S OUR JOB, NO, IT'S OUR GOD-GIVEN SOUL (sole) PURPOSE TO REACH THIS PLANET FOR JESUS CHRIST!!! Suffice it to say, the TRUE CHURCH across this globe has a **GIGANTIC, HUGE, POWERFUL, ENORMOUS MISSION!** But not only a mission, but we have been equipped with everything we need to accomplish that mission. Furthermore, let's not forget how powerful the "true Church" is: "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

The great reducer?

After all that I just wrote, how is the Church in America stacking up? Are we Goliath, or are we David in regard to our effectiveness to do all that we have been commissioned to do?

Reduce: *make smaller or less in amount, degree, or size; bring someone or something to (a lower or weaker state, condition, or role)*

You see from 'how big the True Church' is, that I respect the "Biblical Church," because it was clearly

God's idea, but I do not respect the manmade, Americanized Church. Why? Because the manmade church has been REDUCED to a small, powerless, idea of what 'man thinks the Bible says' about the Church. At it's worst, the Americanized Church is fueled by American culture, compromise, the flesh, and greed. Consider, if you will, a typical weekly Church service in America:



•**Discipleship** has been reduced to a 45 min to an hour sermon with little to no emphasis on the WORD OF GOD. And

even when it is conveyed 'verse by verse,' it's still not considered by itself to be much to 'chew on.' Fifty two hours a year of 'sermons' should NOT be considered to be discipleship.

•**Fellowship** is reduced to a 3 min. time of shaking hands and hugging people who happen to be sitting near us. Or having coffee and donuts with others before and/or after service.

•**Worship** has been relegated to being a cheerleader for the preacher's message, and turns out to be more like an "american idol" performance than a true attempt at worshipping God in Spirit and in Truth; Worse yet, talent is mistaken for and replaces the "anointing of God."

•**Giving** is reduced to ten percent of our earnings and ends up going to building funds and office supplies rather than meeting the needs of people.

•**Gifts of the Holy Spirit and Good Works** are reduced to greeters and ushers, and hospitality is making the coffee for those who come to Sunday service, and those 'good works prepared beforehand' turn out to be someone being on the schedule for the nursery!

•Then there's the **Sabbath?** Seriously?
DISCLAIMER: Clearly, a typical church service in America will have varying degrees of 'reducing.'

It is what it is...lowering the standard?

The Americanized Church is not ALL bad... Of course there are good points to it, but let's not make it something it's not. It is what it is, but it's NOT the Biblical standard by which we are to BE THE Church. It has some benefits, but maybe it's time we shake ourselves from our complacency and comfort, and realize our mission is MUCH BIGGER, MUCH MORE IMPORTANT, MUCH MORE EFFECTIVE, and MUCH MORE PRODUCTIVE than Sunday morning service! As the Church, we are created for MORE, and the only way we can realize MORE is to stop settling for less in the Americanized Church that has a such a great way of reducing.

Just something to think about....Peace In, Big D: