

TURNING AWAY FROM CHRISTIAN SIMPLICITY TO ROMISH HIERARCHY  
In Church Government and Practice

Church Practice and Organization a Part of "Dark Age" Apostasy

First Century Christians

Should we look closely at the first Christian churches, they would appear as "islands" of democratic church activity surrounded by a world of autocracy.

In those early churches, we see worship where the master and slaves, great and small, rich and poor were on equality. Compelling, overhead authority was not present. We see them managing their own, local affairs; making rules and regulations and electing their own officers without dictation from an overhead authority, other than the Holy Spirit.

They are seen to be discussing their differences, repenting, apologizing, and abiding by the majority in the local groups, with the aim of the Great Commission

uppermost in mind. Superiority was only that of character, virtue and influence.

They discussed fervently, sincerely, and often pointedly, affairs pertaining to the welfare of their church.

It is observed that one church did not exercise power over another, but they lived and worked together in spiritual unity and fellowship. Each did not however, live in isolation and seclusion not caring for the welfare of others, but when one suffered, relief and comfort were extended by others.

When the Jerusalem Church was troubled with famine and persecution, others rallied to its support and relief.

Messengers from one to another served well in discussions of affairs common to the welfare of all churches. Conclusions were arrived at, as suggestions and advice, to be passed on to the churches--never as dictatorial and authoritative directives.

What Happened to this Type of Democratic, Christian Conduct in the Churches?

Even in Paul's day the "Mystery of Iniquity" had begun to appear.

Now, it is seen that after the first century A.D, the churches decidedly began losing their democratic ideal of Christianity.

The Roman Empire is seen in this picture, ruling the world. The life of the churches was threatened with persecution.

People remembered that the Roman Empire maintained its power by "imperial organization."

This picture discloses natural tendencies to fashion church government after the civil government, where the bishop was advanced to position of authority, grasping sole power and right in his district to "confirm candidates for bap-

tism, ordain men to the ministry, and to control financial affairs of the churches.

Apostasy in Organization and Doctrine

The Papacy Appears

The Roman Emperor, Constantine, nom- inally accepted Christianity in 323 A.D., and the "Christian flag" floated from the Roman capital, while the "cross" was a banner before the destructive, Roman army.

For a long time some had been dissatisfied with the slow "process of individual conversion." Character training of individuals seemed to them a waste of time. Roman influence was having its effect while the ideal of Christian democracy was being lost.

Hierarchical Church Government Arises

Under such prevailing conditions it was popular to be a Christian and almost meaningless, since quicker and wholesale methods of "Christianizing" people were used for the convenience of Pagan prospect

It is easily seen (Continued on p. 2.)

UNHAPPY, HE

Unhappy he, who knows the right,  
Yet for it is afraid to fight;  
But more so he, who'll side with wrong,  
Because he thinks the foe is strong:  
Or, if to save one's "bread and butter,"  
He will refuse his mind to utter. --Sel.

that the Bible simplicity of Christianity was lost as ceremonies and complicated rituals were set in order. This pleased the Pagans who felt Christianity was too simple--so different from their Pagan ceremonies. Page 2

Pagan emperors therefore assumed the same attitude toward church government as they had toward civil government. Ceremonies, rituals, organizational techniques, and doctrines peculiar to the Roman state were made a part of church procedure and belief. With these mass methods of "conversion" the Pagans were attracted to a type of rapidly deteriorating Christianity which developed into an extremely corrupt and false system apparently described by the apostle Paul and John, the Revelator, in 2nd Thessalonians 2:7-10 and Revelation 17 respectively.

The Council of Nicea in 325 A.D., became a legislative body whose decisions were enforced by law. The Bishop of Rome gained the high position in the "patriarchate" composed of Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Jerusalem and Antioch. First, he claimed powers equal to that of the Emperor, but as the Roman Empire began to decline, he claimed both spiritual and political supremacy over dominions of the Roman Empire.

### Hierarchical Church Government a Product of Rome

Forms and paraphernalia of the Roman government were taken over, and by the 10th century A.D., the church and Roman state were so united in form, practice and authority, that the Roman church and state became truly synonymous.

At last the scene appears where the Bishop of Rome became the "papa," or pope, head of the "Holy Roman Catholic Church," claiming divine right to rule over the church, and of being responsible to no human being.

Next seen in the hierarchy are the Cardinals, the Pope's cabinet. Next to the Cardinals are the Archbishops, representing different parts of the world, and called "princes of the church." Below the Archbishops are the Bishops, ruling over the dioceses. Then next beneath the Bishops are the Priests, ruling over parishes or congregations. On the lowest level in the hierarchy are the deacons, assistants to the Bishops and Priests.

The dominating voice and authority of the Roman Church are with the hierarchy, not with the people composing the church. Obedience to the decrees of the hierarchy, and without question, is their highest duty.

Simplicity of Christianity and the democratic ideal were replaced by the Romans, with a "huge politico-religious machine," placing stress on organization, political control, ceremonies and money. To maintain this machine and to extract the money from the people, most every type of means and device is used.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, please answer the following questions for yourselves, for your responsibility is decidedly involved:

Does your church parallel this corrupt reality of "Dark Age" apostasy, and wreak with evidence of its influence? Regardless of how small your organization may be, does it imitate and maintain a likeness to organizational and doctrinal practice and belief, results of the "Dark Age" crime of the "mystery of iniquity?" See 2nd Thessalonians 2:7-10. God forbid that it does. Apparently, in no period of world history was there greater need for men and women to stand up and be counted for God, than now.

Friends, as you view this picture of transformation from democratic ideals and simplicity of Christianity to fearful, monstrous, political, dominating, hierarchical church organizations, won't you please, for the sake of Christ's cause and kingdom, seek out and follow principles of real Christianity as set forth in the Early Church?

Let us not liken ourselves, our church organization, and our practice to Babylon at whom multitudes admirably wonder and after whom they wander. Banish from your church the works of darkness, but maintain both in your hearts and your church Bible principles of organization, activity and doctrine that energized and enriched the life of the Early Church and all others in succeeding ages who have cherished and practiced such institutions by Christ and His apostles.

Principles of Christianity are the essence of democracy, local church autonomy, freedom in the proclamation of the Gospel, and they condemn the desires and acts of men to be "lords over God's heritage."

Unity effected by fear, coercion, and legislation is not to be mistaken for real unity among believers because of love and respect for each other in fellowship of the Christian brotherhood.

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#### DARE WE GRIEVE GOD'S SPIRIT?

The Holy Spirit is the qualifying factor for witnessing. By this Spirit Jesus was raised from the dead, and by it did Christ minister to the antediluvians.

In this Gospel Dispensation God's Spirit is available for all, and it reveals, strengthens and calls servants into His harvest.

God's Spirit is His power for us. Christ told His disciples that after the "Holy Ghost is come upon you," they would receive power to be witnesses.

By this power was Paul converted,

called into mission fields, and responded to the Macedonian call for help. Had he depended upon the call and direction of men, he doubtless would not have been converted nor have hastened to the mission fields. By the works of men his light would have been dimmed or completely darkened, and his witnessing diminished.

Similar experiences of other disciples could be related

showing how the Holy Spirit must have freedom of operation in the lives of men and in the Church. The Spirit is not to be bound by the acts of men, in seeking to be "lords over God's heritage."

No one in Jerusalem seemed to be aware of Paul's call by the Spirit when he was sent from the church at Antioch. Apparently no permission from Jerusalem was sought to go into mission fields when the Spirit called. Had this been undertaken, no doubt his fruitful work would have been hampered.

Evidently there was no awareness in Jerusalem of Paul's Macedonian call, and no effort on the part of Paul to get permission from Jerusalem to go into Macedonia. God's Spirit directed in Paul's mission work. He and others were not required to have consent of the Apostles at Jerusalem to raise up churches and ordain

elders for them. Neither were they condemned by the Apostles when good news of this mission work reached Jerusalem, but there was good will and rejoicing.

The Biblical picture reveals clearly that God's Spirit directed Paul and others with him in their work of preaching the Gospel of Christ, establishing churches and ordaining elders for them.

It is tragically serious today for individuals through organization to hinder the work of the Holy Spirit in the Church by binding servants who may be called God for a particular mission. It is most

serious to grieve the Spirit in this way--for men to substitute themselves and their decrees of regimentation, as a commanding force in place of the Holy Spirit.

It is no wonder that the message and work so dearly loved is not advanced, but rather observed in retrogression.

By regimentation and coercion in areas of spiritual direction, man tries to do the work, in some respects, that does not belong to him, but

to the Spirit of God. By this type of work the Spirit must be grieved and caused to depart, leaving stagnation, weakness, emptiness, and unfruitfulness.

It is even more tragic for church leadership to interfere with the work of the Spirit than for an individual, since even multitudes might be affected.

It is no wonder therefore, that Jesus came to the peak of His sermon from the Mount by proclaiming:

"Not everyone that sayeth unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.... Many shall say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." See Matthew 7:21-23. DARE WE GRIEVE GOD'S SPIRIT?

#### LORD'S SUPPER SERVICE

Nisan 14th (Jewish Calendar) occurs this year on Friday, the 31st of March (Roman Calendar). Therefore the time for the observance of the Lord's Supper is on Thursday evening, March 30th, since the evening or beginning of the 31st is at that time.

All Christians are sincerely urged to examine themselves and participate in the partaking of the emblems representing the broken body and shed blood of Jesus, our Savior.

This service is always a highlight of the year, and to participate in it by Christians is a privilege and very necessary.

Paul's instructions to the Corinthians are timely and applicable to present-day Christians:

"Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:

"Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth (I Corinthians 5:7,8).

At Home

The Bible Plan for organization covers a lot of ground...but I believe we should stay as close to the Bible as possible in everything we do...then I know God will be on our side.

As to democracy in the Church, let us abide by the rules that can be found in the Scriptures, so there will not be any hierarchy in the Church.

If church-goers will let the Holy Spirit dictate to them, they will be disciplined and I feel that should be church law enough, unless some go into sin, then we can fulfill Matthew 18--go to them as the Word says to go.

I suggest that elders and deacons be used as needed in the Church.... Let the local church board do the planning, then recommend it to the local group for its approval or disapproval by vote, after careful consideration. Let the majority rule.

All church-goers should work for salvation of souls as much as time will allow. Also, they should be interested in foreign fields, and should send money and used clothing to be distributed.

All should work for the Cause of Christ. There's no neutral ground--one is either for or against. Truth should be taught as found in God's word.

Above all, people should be taught really what the Church is--that it is not organization, committees, or a man-made setup, but composed of called-out ones, those born again of the Spirit of God, and those having witness of the Spirit as mentioned in Romans 8:16. Let us search out the "old paths" and get back to the Bible. Let us work and sacrifice for God...with greater zeal than ever before. We must work while it is yet day, for when the night comes no man can work.

I am determined to do more than ever before by the grace of God; to deny myself more and work for salvation of souls; to relieve suffering...and live a peaceful life so much as it lies within me.

Our group aim should be to make Christ known by living faithful lives as faithful witnessing wherever we go. We should associate with other Sabbath-keeping groups, local and otherwise...that we may be drawn closer together for unity and fellowship. Then I know God will bless and we shall grow and expand, and have favor with God.

--Harvey M. Otto, Michigan.

I have fallen down in my correspondence since we moved to Woodland Hills. It seems some one of the family has been sick every day since we moved here. I have some acute problems that came with my new job which have...made me quite nervous. Surely would appreciate the Denver people's remembering these in their prayers.

I have enjoyed the Bulletin very much. The testimonies and reports are encouraging from home and abroad. Keep pressing on with the good publications, and I know the Lord will open the eyes of the people.

The Women's Missionary Group of our church (Los Angeles--Ed.) is trying to raise \$300 for foreign missions. Most of the time they surpass their goal.

--Samuel C. Maynor, California.

(We are sure Brother Maynor also requests prayers of those outside of Denver. Let us remember this request as difficulties of sickness, settling in a new home, and taking over in a new job are encountered. The new address: 23855 Califa Street, Woodland Hills, California. --Ed.)

Just received my first copy of any of your Bulletins and am rejoicing that so many are uniting and working together to bring about reforms that have been needed (I have always felt), ever since the merger in 1949. I have thought of it as a top-heavy organization from the beginning, and was astounded at the tactics used at the last General Conference in Denver, to prevent the people from hearing what they came to Denver to hear.

Wish you would send me three additional copies of this Bulletin, and if you have copies of the account of the Council Sessions, I would like one very much.

Hoping and praying that the Church will grow in unity and strength as a result of your efforts.

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(Sister Odekirk also sent names and addresses for our mailing list. We appreciate her interest also. We have complied with her request.) (Continued on page 5.)

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Elder Mitchell Siler Marrs, 537 North Douglas, Shawnee, Oklahoma, died early Sabbath (Saturday) morning, February 25, in a Shawnee hospital after an illness of about six months.

He was born in Bernie, Missouri, March 5, 1894, but moved with his family to Oklahoma in 1908. Before moving to Shawnee in 1957, he lived in the Dale and Jarvis communities in Pottawatomie County.

Elder Marrs was a member and minister in the Church of God (7th Day), and had been for several years. He was maintenance man and elevator operator at the Federal National Bank building for some time.

Funeral services were conducted in the Roesch Brothers Chapel. Elder Ennis Hawkins, pastor of the Fairview, Oklahoma, Church of God (7th Day) officiated. Burial was in the Tecumseh Mission Cemetery.

Survivors were his wife, Mrs. Vida Marrs; son, Roy A. Marrs, Torrance, California; daughters, Mrs. Pearl Stucker and Mrs. Wilma Ling, New Auburn, Wisconsin; brothers, Elder B. F. Marrs, Denver, Colorado, and Brit and Francis Marrs, Eagle Nest, New Mexico; sisters, Mrs. Clara Posey and Mrs. Florence Hendershott, Shawnee, Oklahoma; and sixteen grandchildren.

Bearers were J. C. Kanady, Bob Scott, William Childers, Roy Kanady, Roy Hendershott, and Ted Lane.

Elder Marrs served well in church activities for many years both as layman and minister. It was a blessing that he passed to his rest without much suffering, and apparently in a cheerful state of mind. He expressed himself as feeling that all was well. He leaves vacancies in the Church of God (7th Day), as minister and layman, that will be difficult to fill by another. He was one who, in cases of differences, refrained from sitting astride the fence, but stood up to be counted on the side he felt was right. Among his papers was found "Unhappy, He," used as a bookmark. The verse is centered on the first page of this Bulletin, and seems to sum up well Brother Marrs' attitude toward personal conviction, and right and wrong.

Brother Mitchell (as so many referred to him) will be missed in the Church and community, but will be remembered, not for showy, spectacular works, but for his faith and constant endeavor even to do the "little things" that must always be done. He seemed satisfied to serve in his proper place, in honor preferring another.

He served as a member of the LRC Advisory Council and took active part in the LRC and AC Meetings in Denver last December, when the Reform and Planning and the Co-operative Associations were organized. His ready assistance will long be appreciated and certainly he and his work will be missed. He looked forward to the accomplishment of much good by both the RPA and CA, pledging himself to support their work.

For several years Elder M. S. Marrs was a member of his local church (Midway) board and committeeman of the Oklahoma State Conference. He filled ministerial appointments outside his community as he was able.

Now, his work is done, and it is for him to rest securely shielded from earth's wrath, until the "Day of Peace" shall dawn when Christ will call him forth from peaceful slumber to begin anew. Surely that DAY will mean much to Brother Marrs, but not to him only--to all made ready for its appearing.

The area of designated leadership is being expanded in the RPA, by the formation of an Advisory Committee of several members. Counsel and advice from extended areas are helpful and necessary; lending emphasis also to the working of democracy.

Also an extended Editorial and Literature Staff is being determined.

Comments and Requests from the Mail at Home (Continued from page 4.)

Please send me five copies of "Church Organization and Activity," that I may hand to some folks who I hope will be more enlightened in our great work. --Lena Seaver, Michigan.

Enclosed find ... to help in the necessary job you have started.... I believe in "government by the people" in church affairs as well as in our government.

--Dola Benthien, Kansas.

I wish to express my feelings about the Council Meetings in Denver. I had been so discouraged at the way the church government and business (Continued on page 6.)

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have been handled, I wondered if it was even possible this council meeting could accomplish much. But I was very much impressed with the meeting, and pleased with the actions and accomplishments. Never have I been to a meeting such as that, where everyone spoke so freely. Ideas were accepted because of the harmony in the purpose of the meeting. It was spiritually uplifting. I was happy to have been present and to have participated in it. I certainly feel it was a blessing to have been able to attend. May the Lord bless the movement is my prayer.--Raymond Johnson, California.

#### P H I L I P P I N E S

I have already opened the work...about 18 kilometers from Tubod. I have contracted for 30 radio broadcasts at two pesos (\$1) each. The time is 8:30-9:00 P.M. each evening. I am also scheduled to speak in the tent from 7:00-8:00 P.M., just before broadcasts. The West Denver Church promised \$15 or more per month. I need at least \$80. I am thankful to the brethren there.

Our tithes and offerings here are only enough to defray our local, monthly expenses. At present, we are only two ordained ministers trying to maintain the Lord's work with a membership of about 200, including our children and young people. I am thankful to God for keeping me in the work, and to brothers and sisters in the States who have helped us....

On the 23rd of this month I am scheduled for work...about 400 miles away in connection with the Lord's Supper Service at the end of this month. After the Lord's Supper I must remain one or two weeks for open air meetings in a near-by town.

I am very much concerned about the Great Commission of our Lord.... I really believe that this commission is also entrusted to us during these last days of world history. How many nations of the world now, are being reached by our message? Are we conscious of our condition as a church? We need to pray the Father more earnestly to send laborers into His harvest.

Please remember me and all the brethren here in your special prayers.

--H. C. Rosell, Tubod, Lanao.