



Miracles that follow the plow :: Church Problems

Church Problems - posted by MetaCipher, on: 2007/8/19 17:41

I have been going to a local church for about 2 years now; it's an Assembly of God church. I know practically everyone t here (it's a smaller church), and I have been involved in the Youth Ministry for over a year. Since the beginning of 2007, I 've had many troubling issues with the church that are driving me in different directions, and ultimately making me frustra ted. Since I am married, and have a baby on the way, I am trying to make the best decisions for my family. Because of t he issues I have with this church, I don't want me family to be put into confusion as well with the teachings and other vari ous things found at this church. To name a few things that bother me:

1. I don't agree with their doctrine of tongues.
2. Since our congregation is growing, spirit of pride has come up. The pastor has said quite a number of times "Can I pre ach or what?" or other similar things. The elders have also said "Isn't our church great?"
3. There is a huge lack of biblical teaching in that place. People get their teaching 100% from the Pastor, and have no sp irit of discernment.
4. In relation to #3 above, the church sometimes is treading grounds of "Word of Faith" teaching. The ideology that throu gh faith God will give me what I want.
5. The Pastor teaches large abstractions from a few verses. Such as the idea of joy based upon a verse in a Psalm, and then the rest of the sermon is generalities and stories.
6. The Worship team acts like their on concert. They frequently add members to their band, and sing songs that are ofte n found in concerts (like Hillsong United). The songs don't seem nearly as powerful as songs like "Amazing Grace." Whe n I write this, the band has 13 members on stage, and more for backup. Our congregation is only about 100 people. It fe els like most of the church is on stage!
7. In relation to #1 and tongues, this is hugely emphasized during worship, alter call, and prayer. I have brought question s to the Pastor before, but he acts as if I am ignorant and points me at Acts 2:4.

These things have been brewing in my spirit for a long time now. I feel like everyone at that Church doesn't know God's word, therefore doesn't know how to discern truth. This became especially obvious during a Sunday school class when t he topic of the "floating Axe head" came up in a lesson. Only the Pastor's wife and I knew anything about that story. We were trying to figure out which prophet that was, but everyone else (about 10 other people) were literally clueless. This is one example of many.

I simply do not know if it is time to leave this church, or if I am simply being judgmental and need to let it go. I do know o ne thing, that I need to discern teachings to find the truth, and by that standard this Church doesn't match up well someti mes; in key areas.

Thank you for reading this, and I look forward to everyones response.

Re: Church Problems - posted by freedbyjc (), on: 2007/8/21 10:24

First and foremost pray...

It sounds like you have solid proof that the assembly is turning away from the truth. You have tried to call them back but your calls are falling in deaf ears. From Matthew 17, as you have gone to the individuals, now is the time to go to the Eld ers with your observations. Document your observations -just like you did in this post- and add all of the scriptural or doc trinal or denomintional documentation you can. Present this to them and ask them to explain to you how what you are se eing aligns itself with the Word of God and the doctrines of the church.

If the ELDERS rebuff you or cannot enlighten you, then you have two options: Continue to be the clarion call of truth and work from within to return them to the truth or walk away and embrace a bible believing church in the area.

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BUT do everything with a solid, continuous and irrepressible cover of prayer.

Re:, on: 2007/8/21 10:45

I agree w/ Freed... be in prayer. Seek to explain to the leaders what your issues are. Make sure you know and understand what you're talking about.

If they ignore you, and continue down the path they are headed, then you have no choice but to leave. Many Christians make the mistake of staying, foolishly thinking they will make a difference where error is being taught. There is another word for this... it's called "compromise".

Scripture never once indicates that we are to do that. We are called to separate. Separation is rarely preached these days, but it is God-ordained, and God commanded. Not as a way of being mean... but as a way of protecting your spiritual well-being, and that of your family. Especially your children.

And pray pray pray...

Krispy

Re:, on: 2007/8/21 11:10

Quote:

------. The Worship team acts like their on concert.

Ha-ha, I miss the good old days at my AOG fellowship of sensual and carnal worship followed by some feel good prophecy. Seriously though, I would be the first to tell you run from Babylon, but as all have well spoken already, pray it over. The Lord kept us in one of these places for six months after we realized it was fraudulent before He told us that we were to leave.

The one thing that does bother me is that you through in that you didn't agree with them on tongues (which is 100% biblical) as one of the reasons among other legitimate ones. Don't let lying signs and wonders cause you to lose faith in genuine signs and wonders.

In Christ - Jim

Re:, on: 2007/8/21 11:11

Here's a great sermon I downloaded just yesterday that you should listen to... it's by Pastor Leo Giovenetti of Mission Valley Christian Fellowship in San Diego, CA.

It's called "How Do I Know When To Leave?"

<http://www.mvcf.com/media/SunAM.asp>

The date on the sermon is 08/05/07. Right now it's the 3rd sermon down from the top. (obviously it will change when they add a new sermon)

This is one of my favorite preachers.

Krispy

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Re:, on: 2007/8/21 11:13

Quote:
-----The one thing that does bother me is that you through in that you didnt agree with them on tounges (which is 100% biblcal) as one of the reasons among other legitmate ones. Don't let lying signs and wonders cause you to lose faith in genuine signs and wonders.

AOG teaches hardline Pentecostal doctrine of tongues being the initial evidence of being Baptised with the Holy Spirit... and if you havent spoken in tongues you havent been Baptised in the Holy Spirit.

This **is** a false doctrine.

Krispy

Re: Church Problems - posted by ccchhrrriiisss (), on: 2007/8/21 11:21

Hi MetaCipher...

Hmmm...it sounds like we might have attended the SAME CHURCH!

:-)

Seriously, there are many Assembly of God churches which seem to be headed in that direction. However, let me make it clear: This problem is not confined to just the Assemblies of God. There are many churches from multiple denominations which are caught up into the same "happy church" quagmire. It just seems that the Assemblies of God, with their unique local "constitutional" setup, provides an opportunity for straying from the simple principles set up when the church began.

Many of these "modern" AG churches are caught into the church growth, seeker and/or health/wealth prosperity movements.

They mistake church population and congregational involvement for success.

They mistake visible manifestations (supposed miracles, organized or spontaneous dancing, worship "concerts," manifestations of the gifts of the Spirit, involvement by the congregation, etc...) as SIGNS of a "healthy" church. Because of this, the pastors often fail to notice the inner decay of the congregation.

These pastors also mistake "submission to authority" (the old "You're under the umbrella of your pastor" rhetoric) for obedience to God. They force the congregation to adhere to their own sense of right and wrong, truth or lie. They fail to realize that the devil and "wolves" don't care about such "umbrellas."

They mistake "true spiritual liberty" as an excuse for the "anything goes" mentality of some of the congregation.

These type of churches replace sound Scriptural "teaching" that is meant to provoke with sound bites that are meant to unoffensively encourage the congregation.

The music is no longer measured by the depth of intimacy or sincerity, but by how well the congregation emotionally responds to the songs and music.

These modern churches are filled with programs, programs, programs. While there is nothing wrong with programs, most of them are designed to promote involvement rather than change lives (even though they claim that these are designed to "reach out").

Evangelism has changed from one-on-one interaction to mass, media-inspired events (such as dramas, plays, concerts, food giveaways, or visual spectacles). They trade promotion and advertising for inspired evangelism.

The pastors report that "multitudes" are saved, yet have a difficult time understanding why their churches don't grow by the same number.

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These churches dismiss the discrepancies by simply claiming that they "don't care which church these people eventually attend." Yet true "follow up" shows that most of these people don't go to church at all -- and that many of them simply don't even take their "decisions" seriously.

The congregation is encouraged to "claim" the "blessings" that God "has for us." Yet this is typically confined to measures of health/wealth. They equate spiritual happiness and success with the temporary pleasures of this life. How often do you hear the pastors of such congregations remind the congregation that everything will one day burn with fire? How often do they preach against greed or lusting after the things of this world?

MetaCipher, I would encourage you to speak privately with your pastor. If he is sincere, he will understand and perhaps share many of your own concerns. In fact, there are some pastors who feel "trapped" into these sort of church setups. They are approved for their position, and then fall into the cycle of "seeker church" leader. They fear the repercussions from changing the status quo. As a result, the church proudly breaks "tradition" and continues along the same ant paths as most modern, seeker churches. While the newcomers and church hoppers are happy, the sincere and more mature believers tend to leave.

You are in my prayers.

:-)

*Edit:
- Unlike Krispy, I'm persuaded that tongues IS indeed the initial evidence of the "baptism of the Holy Spirit" (which I believe is a completely separate experience from salvation). However, I don't enjoy the "forced" tongues mentality or how many modern AG churches are encouraged to publicly speak and pray in tongues (as if they can turn it on and off at will) during services. I'm pretty much convinced that the vast majority of such people really do not truly speak in tongues in the first place (*ducking as I look around for shooting darts).

Re:, on: 2007/8/21 11:22

Quote:
-----AOG teaches hardline Pentecostal doctrine of tongues being the initial evidence of being Baptised with the Holy Spirit... and if you haven't spoken in tongues you haven't been Baptised in the Holy Spirit.

I apologize if that is the case, my local congregation did not teach that, they taught it as a secondary act of God. I would definitely agree that is a false doctrine. It saddens me to think of how many people are speaking in tongues straight to hell because their hearts have never been converted by the love of Christ.
In Him - Jim

Re: - posted by MetaCipher, on: 2007/8/21 17:38

Thank you for everyone's response. Everyone has gotten my Church right on. Especially the lengthy (but good) post by "ccchhrrriiiss."

Regarding tongues, I don't wish to start a hate/love thread or anything. All I have to say is, for myself I don't believe in tongues in the sense that AoG does, but I DO believe in tongues in the sense of foreign/unlearned languages. And for the benefit of AoG, they don't teach Baptism "with" the Holy Spirit is necessary for salvation, they teach Baptism "in" the Holy Spirit is, which is basically being saved. The Baptism "with" is, like someone mentioned, a secondary act and is the Baptism that involves tongues (Basically, they teach two baptisms; which is utterly ridiculous btw). I don't want to argue on this nor do I want other people to, I'd much rather look at the important issues.

KrispyKrittr, I'll listen to that sermon ASAP, as I am sure it will be beneficial.

I'll be praying over this. Once again, thanks everyone for your responses.

Re: Church Problems, on: 2007/8/21 19:26

MetaCipher,

Congratulations on being one of the few struggling to enter through the straight gate!

"...to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word... they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations. I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not. Hear the word of the LORD, ye that tremble at his word; Your brethren that hate you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the LORD be glorified: but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall all be ashamed... Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child..." (ISAIAH 66:2-7)

"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." (MATT 7:13-14)

Re: - posted by poet (), on: 2007/8/21 22:32

I'd like to make a comment about the AOG.

I had been going to the AOG for about 5 years now, and one topic that came up was that one of their tenets of faith is that being filled with the spirit has the evidence of speaking in tongues, as the spirit gives utterance.

I would emphasize as..

but when they quote that they mean always. but I would mean not always.

I go to a new church now AOG again .

we had a new beginners class, and one of the

new people asked about it because they don't speak in tongues and the pastor said kinda quietly its ok , not everyone believes that ,

and like him I believe its a gift like all other gifts of the spirit, some healing or discernment... we need a lot of that one don't we.

If someone believes that speaking tongues is the initial evidence, I wouldn't consider that a separation issue, because a lot of people get their doctrine from their experience, and not from scripture. you just have to be careful if people's experiences won't stand up to scripture at all and become heretical. Leading us from Christ.

If you enjoy your fellowship and can ignore some issues, Just keep going and praying, but if you become confrontational about tenants of faith, you will just be asked to leave.

I say this because when we see some things going on that we don't agree with, we can, and I don't mean your are, but we can sometimes have a religious spirit or be overly prideful.

My problem with my first church was that I went to bible college and started seeing too much, and im a little over zealous and my pride killed me and my relationship with my pastor, I sure wish I would have prayed a lot longer, and tried to use a lot more grace when talking to him.

And never, ever talk to other church members about your doctrinal issues, you will be perceived as trying to cause division, or division..

If you have to discuss your issues, stick only to the leadership, and If you don't get peace then you will quietly leave... why quietly leave.

because for your sake, and for someone's else's sake who may be new to christ or church, and they may get poisoned by a rift. you never know who's watching and trying to decide to follow christ or not.

Have a great day.

Update - posted by MetaCipher, on: 2007/9/4 17:38

In respect to all the information posted, I have prayed about all of this. I wrote a letter to my pastor, and he promptly responded.

Let's just say he ignored 90% of what I wrote, and wrote back primarily in defense of his sermons (surprise, surprise). And I quote, "I can see how you might come to some of your conclusions due to your limited understanding of the whole scope of operating a church and the amount of time that you have invested in this fellowship."

There are also some other interesting quotes:

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"The decision you make has the ability to affect eternity for your whole family."

"The ones that you say are in SS and yet do not know the Word are at least trying to come and learn, so does it really matter how long they have been coming."

"I do fear that much of your information or research data is slanted or tilted to reject Pentecostal beliefs and as such will distort your ability to truly understand."

Need I say more? It is obvious that he is reading my letter with the idea that he is already correct, and that I am obviously ignorant.

This has revealed a tremendous amount of character.

I look forward to everyone's response.

Re: Church Problems - posted by narrowpath, on: 2007/9/4 18:33

Dear Metacipher,

Thanks for your post. I find you have been given helpful advice here already. You are pretty much in the same situation we have been a while ago.

We just left our local charismatic church for similar reasons.

- 1) There is no preaching that convicts, people are only being encouraged and affirmed in their ways, no mention of sin and sinners, only "hurting" people.
- 2) Manipulated manifestations of the Spirit.

- 3) WoF teaching, Kingdom Dominion and other questionable doctrines.

I had a number of discussions with our elders about that. One of them really went out of his way to visit me a couple of times. I could not convince him but he was kind hearted and courteous while listening to my explanations. We even prayed together before we parted.

For a couple of months I thought I can help to get the church back on track. When I tried to start conversations about subjects of the faith, I hardly found anyone interested. Then I felt to follow the example of those Jews who left Babylon to build the temple in Jerusalem in Ezra 1.

We now started attending a Pentecostal church 10 miles away. We feel it was the right step.

Philip

Re: - posted by MetaCipher, on: 2007/9/4 22:33

I am starting to realize that these charismatic movements are growing all over the place. Hank Hanaggraff was correct in stating the seriousness of error of scripture, and the spreading of such teachings as Word of Faith, the Third Wave, and Kingdom Dominion. All of these have roots in charismatic churches, which are often AoG or other Pentecostal churches. I know of the main AoG speaking against such teachings, but locally it doesn't seem to be the case.

I am glad to see that you have had honest discussions with someone that was willing to listen and not become offensive. I wish for us to all become loyal to Christ, and no longer our denomination.

I do believe we are to come to Elders and Pastors, as you have done, to make them aware. If they do not listen, we are no longer bound in such situations in which case we can wipe off our feet and leave.

In regards to the letter my pastor sent, I have responded to him. I do not know what he will respond with, but I hope that it will happen according to God's will.

Thank you everyone for all your support.