

**General Topics :: Modernism and emotionalism in churches**

**Modernism and emotionalism in churches - posted by davym (), on: 2007/10/16 4:35**

Modernism and emotionalism in churches

I suspect this point may have been labored here on SI before, but I'm raising it again because I have a deep frustration in my heart. It's to do with what I would class as 'modernistic' thinking and 'emotionalism' in churches.

I'll keep this short.

1. Why do church leaders insist in 'modernising' their 'churches'? All I see this as being is a move to make churches more worldly under the guise of 'God is doing a new thing!' This is nonsense (in my opinion). God is not doing a new thing, all that's happening is an appeasement of young people who, being rightly told to forsake the world, try to bring the world into the church. THIS IS NOT FORSAKING THE WORLD! We end up with a confused message going out to young people. We need real Gospel preaching which leads to genuine conversions! Then we need sound Biblical teaching. It's simple. If I state this opinion I'm told I'm old fashioned. (by the way I'm only 30)

2. Another issue I have is 'emotionalism'. It's closely linked to point 1. Don't get me wrong I love worship and I'm not against raising of hands etc AS LONG AS IT'S GENUINE! But I see worshippers singing their heart out and waving their hands around and then after the service I would get into conversation with them and they couldn't even explain what they're singing about. There's something radically wrong with that.

I don't want to go on about this as it is quite negative. On the plus point most people are willing to listen when I discuss wonderful Bible truths with them. I think I'm really criticising church leaders (especially younger ones) who've allowed this to develop in churches. Or perhaps maybe I just don't 'get it'!

**Re: Modernism and emotionalism in churches - posted by RobertW (), on: 2007/10/16 4:53**

Quote:  
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Paul Washer laments that youth have two primary sources of their theology; Christian T-shirts and their music. Now, I would not worry so much if the songs were hymns written by Charles Wesley, Toplady, or some other God influenced writer. But we live in a day when songs are written to glorify the singer and the guy on the guitar or piano. The object seems to be to make it to the Dove awards or score a #1 hit. Very short sided choruses. The main thrust of the song is not the lyric- but the arrangement. This music allows people to feel a *temporary false sense of Spirituality* that cheaply substitute a real walk and devotional life with God. This is why it is so shallow. Many young people only ever 'feel' Spiritual during the song service.

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It is because "bigger is better" has overtaken many of their minds. They are concerned not with what 'sort' the Church is, but what 'size' it is. This is worldly mindedness in the name of evangelism. This is why so many churches have so many people and so little of God's Holy Spirit.

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The question is, what to do about it? Keep casting the net. Keep on seeking the face of God for your own life and allow that life to pour out around you. Carnal minds view correction as criticism. So rather than focusing on cursing the darkness we have to shine the light by presenting what is genuine. When our lives become truly Spiritual a remnant will hear and follow. Not everyone is going to repent and want God. Many will want to come to Church for every reason but God. God will show you who the remnant is- focus on pouring into their lives rather than throwing stones at the goats. Preach too hot for the wolves to hang around.

**Re: - posted by davym (), on: 2007/10/16 5:09**

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Thanks for that Robert.

**Re: Modernism and emotionalism in churches, on: 2007/10/16 5:47**

Quote:  
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davym wrote:  
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1. Why do church leaders insist in 'modernising' their 'churches'? All I see this as being is a move to make churches more worldly under the guise of 'God is doing a new thing!'  
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I went to one of these modern, seeker sensitive churches for about four years, trying to help them (in my mind). I had the title of worship coordinator but could never coordinate any worship because they had a schedule to keep and God forbid they should go over one hour.

From my experience and watching other new churches pop up, in my humble opinion, most of the church has strayed from God so since there are no blessings coming from heaven, they've got to resort to humanistic ways and tactics.

Which leads me to my next point, that they are only looking at numbers so they can say "Oh I've got the fastest growing church in \_\_\_\_\_ County." They cannot answer you how many people has been set free by the blood of Jesus Christ but they have the fastest growing church!!!

I read in Leadership magazine a couple of years ago that one of the fastest growing churches in Minnesota (sp?), I think, went to movie theatre rocking chairs with cup holders so they could draw more people and of course, keep the coffee off the carpet!!

On the positive side, if people (leaders) could or would get a truly deeper relationship with Jesus, Father God AND the Holy Spirit and pray for revival, things would change.

God bless you in your walk with Him,

**Re: Modernism and emotionalism in churches - posted by poet (), on: 2007/10/16 7:21**

your frustration is warranted.

Jesus said that the gate was narrow and few would find it...

Jesus didnt lie. You see a difference and so do many on this website.

Keep the course and dont worry about what others are doing, the dead will bury their own dead just seek God and pray for those who are lost, maby someone will feel the same way you do and you can be prayer partners and pray together at the church for change and repentance.

God bless and keep winning.

**Re:, on: 2007/10/16 8:34**

There will be a great apostasy before the coming of the lawless one. We are catching a glimpse of that now. We must never conclude that our churches are full of pastors who just dont understand how to protect Gods glory or oversee a flock correctly, and full of Christians that just dont know how to act like Christians.

Modern American Christianity is a great whore, a type of babylon if not they babylon. As the godly men who speak on S I say, less then 10-15% of evangelical church goers in America are born again according to their fruit. How is that possible, because the majority of pastors behind our pulpits on Sunday mornings are ministers of the devil. There will always be tares even among Godly congregations, but we are seeing a great apostasy that goes far beyond that.

We are called to come out and be seperate from this thing, to touch not her unclean alters.

"Flee from Babylon! Run for your lives! Do not be destroyed because of her sins. It is time for the LORD's vengeance; he will pay her what she deserves." ~Jeremiah 51:6

Love in Christ - Jim

**Re: - posted by davym (), on: 2007/10/17 5:41**

Just wanted to thank those who replied. I've been greatly encouraged by this thread. I feel clear direction has been given to all of us who recognise this problem.

God Bless

**Re: - posted by davym (), on: 2007/10/17 10:37**

Just found this article by RC Sproul which sheds further light on this discussion.

Good Intentions Gone Bad by R.C. Sproul

The adage tells us that there is a destination, the road to which is paved with good intentions. It is the destination that we would prefer not to reach. Good intentions can have disastrous results and consequences. When we look at the revolution of worship in America today, I see a dangerous road that is built with such intentions. The good purposes that have transformed worship in America have as their goal to reach a lost world— a world that is marked by baby boomers and Generation Xers who have in many ways rejected traditional forms and styles of worship. Many have found the life of the church to be irrelevant and boring, and so an effort to meet the needs of these people has driven some radical changes in how we worship God.

Perhaps the most evident model developed over the last half century is that model defined as the "seeker-sensitive model." Seekers are defined as those people who are unbelievers and are outside of the church but who are searching for meaning and significance to their lives. The good intention of reaching such people with evangelistic techniques that include the reshaping of Sunday morning worship fails to understand some significant truths set forth in Scripture.

In Romans 3, Paul makes abundantly clear that unconverted people do not seek after God. Thomas Aquinas understood this and maintained that to the naked eye it may seem that unbelievers are searching for God or seeking for the kingdom of God, while they are in fact fleeing from God with all of their might. What Aquinas observed was that people who are unconverted seek the "benefits" that only God can give them, such as ultimate meaning and purpose in their lives, relief from guilt, the presence of joy and happiness, and things of this nature. These are benefits the Christian recognizes can only come through a vital, saving relationship with Christ. The gratuitous leap of logic comes when church leaders think that because people are searching for benefits only God can give them, they must therefore be searching after God.

d. No, they want the benefits without the Giver of the benefits. And so structuring worship to accommodate unbelievers is misguided because these unbelievers are not seeking after God. Seeking after God begins at conversion, and if we are to structure our worship with a view to seekers, then we must structure it for believers, since only believers are seekers.

The purpose of corporate assembly, which has its roots in the Old Testament, is for the people of God to come together corporately to offer their sacrifices of praise and worship to God. So the first rule of worship is that it be designed for believers to worship God in a way that pleases God.

Another erroneous assumption made in the attempt to restructure the nature of worship is that the modern generation has been so changed by cultural and contextual influences—such as the impact of the electronic age upon their lives—that they are no longer susceptible to traditional attempts of being reached by expository preaching. So the focus of preaching has moved in many cases away from an exposition of the Word of God. We assume this alteration is necessary if we are to reach the people who have been trapped within the changes of our current culture. The erroneous assumption is that in the last fifty years, the constituent nature of humanity has changed, as if the heart can no longer be reached via the mind. It also assumes that the power of the Word of God has lost its potency, so that we must look elsewhere if we are to find powerful and moving experiences of worship in our church. Though the intentions may be marvelous, the results, I believe, are and will continue to be catastrophic.

**Re: - posted by Miccah (), on: 2007/10/17 14:47**

I attended a seeker sensitive church before I was a believer. You know what happened, the Lord led me out of this place. Why? Because I was asking God "Is this it? Is this all there is? There must be more than this?" God showed and sowed so much more once I left. Once I left, I was saved within 1 month. I started being discipled by a missionary couple and started attending house church in place of traditional church. I learned that we need to be sensitive to the seeker, not seeker sensitive. There is a big difference.

Why am I telling you this? Because I think we need to be careful in suggesting that one of these places (modern) are not of the Lord. This place was holding me back, not because the people were bad, but because the saving grace of the Lord was not present throughout most.

I have been in many different churches that look and feel like your stereotypical church. The only thing wrong with some of these churches is that the Lord is not manifest. Same goes for some of the "modern" churches. On the other hand, there are many churches down both sides that have the Lord manifest. Then guess what...sometimes the Lord is present even not being in a place of worship.

The Lord is bigger than a building. The Lord is bigger than his temples. The Lord is present.

What we do with His presence is the key, not where we "look" for his presence. Who knows, He may just throw something out here that no one expects and go from there.

Miccah

**Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2007/10/17 15:06**

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And this is why it is so important to teach repentance. People do not want to deal with guilt because it is a pride destroyer, might interfere with your self-esteem! Actually, if you really are interested in godly self-esteem (yes, I know this sounds like an oxymoron) just act contrary what your pride argues you to do and see what happens!

Loved this article. Lots of food for thought here...Thanks for posting.

ginnyrose

**Re: - posted by elected (), on: 2007/10/17 15:31**

I rather would say that the church is living in the babylonian captivity and spiritual blindness and lukewarmness but praise God for the faithful remnant who have not defiled themselves by worshipping other idols beside God. For long time it has been the problem of Israel beside worshipping God they builded altars in high places and sacrificed to idols.

That's the great apostasy and spiritual heresy of the majority of western evangelical Christians, they profess and proclaim loud and clear the God of Israel but will cherish and profess secret allegiance to the modern idols who often are very sophisticated and shapeless.

Easy believism, shallow theology, faith without repentance, a Christianity without holiness and a savior without lordship is offered to people. No wonder the results lead often to spurious awakenings and fruitless lives. Only God can see how many millions hold the form of Christian religion but deny its power.

**Re: - posted by ccchhrrriiiss (), on: 2007/10/17 15:53**

Hi Miccah...

Quote:

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I think that I understand what you are saying.

For several years, I attended a more traditional Pentecostal/holiness type of fellowship. As time went on, however, I noticed the messages/leaders of the Church morph into a more prosperity, seeker sensitive charisma fellowship. It was a difficult thing to endure. There is a strong authoritarian attitude amongst many of these preachers. They feel that it is their obligation and/or responsibility to make certain that all of the sheep "fall in line" with the "vision" of the Church leadership. This particular church began encouraging people who didn't agree with everything to simply leave.

Eventually, I took their advice! However, I must be quick to point out that such a spirit of "our way or the highway" is not just confined to modern churches. There are traditional churches that are just as steeped in authoritarian levels of doctrinal enforcement. I even visited a pacifist congregation that violently resisted (using words, rhetoric and gossip rather than physical weapons) anyone who did not adhere to their particular views of the Church.

Should we dismiss all "modern churches" on the basis of some of their beliefs?

First of all, there is no clear definition of what a "modern" church is. To some, even a traditional Baptist, Methodist or Pentecostal congregation might be "modern" in regard to practice and administration. Often, we dismiss churches as "modern" simply because they do not adhere to what we feel are the "tried and true" beliefs of the traditional church. An honest look into the history of the Church (including our administration, meeting structure, buildings and even terminology) might reveal that even "traditional" churches are found lacking and "modern" when compared to the early Church.

There are certainly some obvious practices that we can regard as part of a movement that attempts to make Church more acceptable and accessible to the modern world. These sort of churches are largely concerned with "growth" and "involvement." These sort of fellowships "think outside of the box" in order to provide a "reason" to join a particular fellowship. Concerts, comedians, fellowships, music, dress, dramas, family programs, etc... are all used to "keep the ball rolling." While we can easily dismiss this sort of emphasis as taking away from the power and person of Christ, does this necessarily mean that such a Church is a "lost cause?"

In regards to the *Seven Churches* found in Revelation 2 and 3, we discover that there can be true believers (and even H OPE) for the most errant of Churches. I suppose that we need to be careful to distinguish between the ideology, administration and institution of supposed "churches" -- and what makes up the true Church. We can no more completely dismiss a local Church that preaches tithing as a doctrine for not being a part of "true Christianity" than we can dismiss the Church of Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and even Laodicea. The Church is not the doctrine

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e, but the people. It is the people that make up the Body of Christ. There are certainly some beliefs that are not proper representations of the Body of Christ. But at what point should we declare them ineligible of inclusion? Shouldn't we instead focus on the obvious roots of doctrinal flaws, rather than the outcomes of such roots? The root of prosperity could be greed or a lust for the things of this world. Do you see what I mean?

I know some wonderful believers who attend some of the questionable "modern" fellowships. I know some wonderful and sincere believers who tend toward once calvinist ideas, even though I don't actually agree with their beliefs. Yet I have no right or authority to question their spiritual state. I only have a right (and need) to question all beliefs and methodology that is presented as "truth" -- regardless whether it is "modern" or "ancient" in acceptance. We cannot have true "revival" until we first realize our state and the state of our Church union.

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