

Articles and Sermons :: Tethered to Traditionalism**Tethered to Traditionalism, on: 2010/12/6 7:50**

I came across this, and felt it worthy of consideration. Your thoughts?

From the new book TETHERED

by Tim Miller

In many cases the organizational structure of the church is hallowed ground for those who have become satisfied with a spiritual lethargy and apathy. In their opinion, nothing is wrong with the church as long as their personal comfort zone is not challenged.

This predominant "me-ism" has ushered into being a very self-centered, self-reliant, faithless, prayerless, and powerless church---albeit very comfortable. The New Testament church was focused upon explosion, while today's traditional church is programmed for implosion.

We have organized ourselves for certain failure in fulfilling Christ's commission as we move in exactly the opposite direction He mandated. ...

Consider the typical traditional Sunday morning worship service. Remember, traditionalism leans heavily upon the past. Each week, many churches hold to the same identical format as they have been for decades. Consequently, they have a stand up---sit down ritual. The offering is received during the same time period in each service.

The only thing with fluidity is the songs they sing which seem to be repeated at least by-monthly. The sermon is preached followed by an invitation in most protestant congregations. Sunday evening follows the same type of format. Wednesday (or other midweek) evenings are little different and form varies from congregation to congregation.

Theoretically, it is quite possible to maintain this same format for years and years without ever seeing a significant movement of God. This type ritual is somehow supposed to invoke the presence of God into our midst. How could we have drifted into such dead repetitious form in order to seek the Lord?

The puzzling thing is hundreds and thousands of people seem to think (at least, in part) going through this ritual every week is what it means to be "Christian." Traditional repetition has a way of blinding the eyes and waxing cold the heart. Can anyone who practices this predictable cycle remember what it was like to truly be in the presence of God?

What happened to Moses during His experience with the burning bush? How about Isaiah when he saw the vision of heaven? What about Solomon when the glory of God fell upon the temple? What happened to Paul on the road to Damascus?

These events were hardly nonchalant or casual. God doesn't always move with such astonishing displays, but when He does move---when He is truly present---lives are forever changed---no one sleeps, and no one is bored. And although we should not live for these movements of God, I sure do not want to live "without" them.

Unfortunately, our systematic organization has replaced God's imminent presence. Spontaneity and sensitivity to the Spirit's leadership have been eclipsed by form and time constraints. While we sleep through our time honored traditions---people are perishing without Christ.

Tim Miller; excerpt from "Tethered"

Re: Tethered to Traditionalism - posted by Oracio (), on: 2010/12/8 1:52

Quote:
-----The puzzling thing is hundreds and thousands of people seem to think (at least, in part) going through this ritual every week is what it means to be "Christian." Traditional repetition has a way of blinding the eyes and waxing cold the heart.

Yes, we give both the lost and saved the impression that that is what it means to be a Christian, because that is the only thing that many of them see. They do not see the vitality and power that we read about in Acts.

In my area when someone becomes a Christian, many do not speak of that person as having become a Christian. Many usually say of the new believer, "He/She started going to church." That's what they actually perceive Christianity to be all about, going to church. I find that to be a sad description of the followers of Jesus Christ.

This traditionalism does indeed have a way of binding and blinding.

For instance, not too long ago a brother advised me over the phone that he wanted to come out with me to help with the homeless outreaches I've been a part of. It so happened that the outreach was scheduled for the next day on a Sunday at around 11am and there was really no way to re-schedule it for a different day or time of the day.

Well, since the outreach time conflicted with his church service(the second service on Sunday) he advised me he could not make it. He felt he had committed himself to be a faithful attender and tither on Sundays at the second service and he could not break away from that routine, no matter what. To him it would have been a sin for him to miss the church service in order to feed and clothe the homeless and preach the gospel to them.

I perceived that this brother, along with multitudes of believers, are in bondage to that type of traditionalism.

On another note pertaining to traditionalism, many believers argue that form does not really matter when it comes to church meetings. But common sense tells us that the type of functioning that goes on in the meeting will depend on the form or format of the meeting.

If the meeting is restricted to a collection, a few songs picked out by the pastor or worship team, and a sermon, that is all that will take place as far as function goes. If the meeting is not so restricted but instead allows more participation from other believers as seen in 1Cor.14, then that is the kind of functioning that will take place.

Please do not misread me. I am not saying that God will not show up in such restricted meetings. But is that really what He intended for His Church?