

**A Look at the Contemporary Church
Through the Theological
Lens of the Pauline Texts**

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Abstract

This research paper will take a look at the issues that continue to pervade the Contemporary Church as it relates to the lens of the Pauline Texts. It will try to seek out according to the Bible, if the church is staying in line with the message of Jesus as it moves to incorporate the methodology which would appeal to this new age of faith seekers. By taking information first from the foundation of truth which we will have based on the Scriptures, the Word of God, the research will be able to compare some trends and try to discover if there are missing pieces. Secondly it will gather scholarly writings and then get more information from interviews with some young people, Pastors, leaders and lay members to find out if the Contemporary Church is here to stay, is this church growing and why, and what, if any effect will it's teachings have on where this age is heading as it relates to the preparation for one's final destination.

In short, this research seeks to evaluate if the plan of the Contemporary church is in accordance with the Word of God? This research is driven with purpose as it seeks to expose the problem of the missing pieces. If in fact it is found that something is missing, what can be done before this missing piece grows deeper and darker, it is the hope that this research will endeavor to shed some light on that piece and to bring together the puzzle.

The focus scriptures for this research paper will be the following, as this research will base all investigations, questions and findings on these foundational truths. 2 Timothy 3: 1-17 and 2 Timothy 4: 1-4 affirms:

3. “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. ²For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, ³Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, ⁴Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; ⁵Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. ⁶For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, ⁷Ever learning, and never able to

come to the knowledge of the truth. ⁸ Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. ⁹ But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was. ¹⁰ But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, ¹¹ Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me. ¹² Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. ¹³ But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. ¹⁴ But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; ¹⁵ And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: ¹⁷ That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Timothy 3: 1-17). KJV¹

“I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;

² Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine.

³ For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

⁴ And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” (2 Timothy 4:14) KJV²

1. *Holy Bible*, King James Version

2. *Holy Bible*, King James Version

INTRODUCTION

The word contemporary can be described from dictionary sources as existing, occurring, or living at the same time; belonging to the same time: and of the present time; modern: Therefore this contemporary meaning is generating synonymic words such as instant, modern, present day, current, latest, mod, and now. These words are hard pressed against the forms of tradition and its meanings which anchors on something to be handed down or relating to or characteristic of the older style. The traditional is joined by words such as classic, common, conventional historic, old, and long established. We can certainly see a meaningful difference as it relates to those things, ordinances, lifestyles, and more particularly our everyday churches and church services. It is that which incorporates the people of the era, those that embrace the contemporary and those that shun the traditional. This includes the scope of our older generations and certainly the ‘Millennials’ as well.

Our Contemporary church is breaking the traditional ties that bound them to the first century church. In an essay, written by Dr. John H. Armstrong he states that “the contemporary plan is plain... create a worship service (none dare call it liturgy) that is fast-paced, light on doctrine and very heavy on music and drama. We are preoccupied, with being “trendier-than-thou.”³ He notes that one church advertises, ‘Church like You’ve Never Seen It Before’ while another in which this author has observed advertises, ‘Changing the Way We Do Church.’ So we can ask why are we looking for a church likened unto one we have not seen before and or one that is not based on the principles, doctrines or standards that have been taught by Jesus. Did not Jesus proclaim that “upon this rock I will built my church and the gates of hell will not

³. Dr. John H Armstrong, “” “The Contemporary Church” - [albatrus.org, www.albatrus.org/english/church-order/worship/contemporary_church.htm](http://albatrus.org/www.albatrus.org/english/church-order/worship/contemporary_church.htm).

prevail against it” (Matt. 16:18) KJV One question that prevails overhead and in our race to have the biggest, and most captivating sanctuary or a church building that the church, unchurched and millennials have ever laid their eyes on, is our thought as to ‘what the church looks like to its Pastors and leaders,’ and ‘does it look any different as to what Jesus says the church should be?’ Many questions come to the forefront as ‘what is observed by those outside of the buildings in which many worship,’ and ‘how the church which is not the building is being presented worldwide?’ C. Peter Wagner writes that ‘church growth thinking leads to a methodology that is “phenomenological” not “theological.”

“That approach (i.e. phenomenological) may appear altogether too subjective to many traditional theologians...As a starting point, church growth often looks to the 'is' previous to the 'ought.'...What Christians experience about God's work in the world and in their lives is not always preceded by careful theological rationalizations. Many times the sequence is just the opposite: theology is shaped by Christian experience.”⁴

When we look at the contemporary church, there appears to be a disconnect in communicating the foundational truths of the Pauline texts to what is also known as a new age church that is in search of its own truth. Can there be a meeting of the minds, or does one’s point of view need be considered as right, while the other is considered wrong? The Contemporary church seeks to be inclusive of all people, and finding a new means of making all who enter into its doors very comfortable. Are they finding their own niche into a newly developed spiritual environment that is lacking and is leaving out the teachings, preaching, and the moral and spiritual fiber of the Bible, and the practical principles cited in the Pauline texts? Are they

⁴. John MacArthur, *Ashamed of the Gospel: When the Church Becomes Like the World*, 3rd ed. (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2010), 79.

thereby painting a very vague message for the ‘truth seekers’ of the Contemporary church to engage themselves?

The internal growth of the existing church and the apparent frenzy to plant new churches under some denominational title will be seen in positive light in regards to this research, if the outreach embraces the true Gospel message. Creativity in this outreach is healthy if the church will base its foundational truth on the principles of the Scriptures. However it has been seen far too many times that the quick establishment of the new movements will lack doctrinal truths. Despite it being important that as the Gospel is spread to every nation and people, it should make sense that more locations should be acquired to accommodate the people that will be drawn to the faith.

But problems arise when there is confusion between the clarity of the Gospel message and the increased trending to overlay or set as priority the emphasis on building a mission for monetary gain and prestige with secondary emphasis on making disciples. The Scriptures establishes for growth, principle and order, “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matt. 6:33). KJV

There is a tendency, because of the technological age in which we live to compromise and restructure the Contemporary church and its worship service to focus on the culture of people with which we desire to attract otherwise they will take their business elsewhere. At the communities fingertips are advertisements of many of the different menus of worship in which they might choose to fit their liking or that which appeals to their circumstances. As stated by one of the focus scriptures to this research that “the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; ⁴ And they shall turn away their ears from the truth” (2 Tim. 4:3-4a). KJV

Knowing this factor as it relates to the Contemporary church, the traditional membership and this age of millennials, it causes one to consider the message that is being put out there, locally, universally, socially and technologically. Meeting needs does not always satisfy needs; it often strokes further ones and raises the pressure of eventual disillusionment...Need is subject to consumer fashion and become shallow, plastic and manipulative.”⁵ The drive to meet ‘felt needs’ can cover up the ‘real need’ and that the truth of the Gospel expressed in the Pauline texts, separation from God.

IMPORTANCE OF THE PAULINE TEXTS

What are the Pauline Texts or Epistles and what makes them important? The author of these Epistles is known by scholars as having been written by Paul the Apostle. This was the same Paul known earlier as Saul of Tarsus, a Roman citizen and also known as a religious Jew, who zealously sought to persecute the church. As he was on the road to Damascus, during one of his campaign missions against the Christians, he had his encounter with Jesus the Christ and was immediately converted.

Being exposed to the light of the risen Christ, it became clear as it related to the One Paul once denied as we see in Acts 22: “And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me. And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?”⁸ And I answered, who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest.¹⁰ And I said, what shall I do, LORD? It was after this encounter that Paul’s life will be completely changed forever. With this meeting Paul has a new assignment and after this miraculous change, it now ‘particularly qualifies’ him to be the one

5. Os Guinness, *Dining with the Devil* (Grand Rapids, MI: Hourglass Books, 1993),

called to carry the message of the gospel to the Gentiles. Paul accepts this assignment which he carries out with the same zeal, vigor and commitment in which he denied Christ. So we can expect a great deal of influence on his converts, and passion in the letters Paul has written because of his dramatic meeting with Christ Jesus.

“The Epistles are generally divided into the Pauline Epistles and the Non-Pauline (General) Epistles. Paul’s epistles fall into two categories: nine epistles written to churches (Romans to 2 Thessalonians) and four pastoral and personal epistles (1 and 2 Timothy, Titus and Philemon) followed by eight Hebrew Christian epistles (Hebrews to Jude). Many questions would arise as to the meaning and application of the gospel for Christians. The Epistles answer questions, give the interpretation of the person and work of Christ, and apply the truth of the gospel to believers.”⁶

The scholars have concluded the authorship of the texts either by explicit means or implicitly. One is because the author in some texts clearly identifies himself, gives a recognized form or has given some autobiographical details. The texts include fourteen books of the New Testament writings, but the book of Hebrews is one that does not give clear clues as to its authorship. The Pauline letters contain similar phrases and sentence structure and a certain style in that the scholars were able to attribute these writings as Paul’s and in them we find narratives regarding his life and his ministry. The narrative of Paul’s conversion gives us a clear picture of what God wants for the Contemporary church of today. This research will reveal that a sudden or gradual encounter with the risen Savior, lives will be changed. Once the gospel is preached or taught to people they will not be the same. The unbeliever will only need to hear the Gospel (recognizing God’s love) and see the light of the Word to be convicted of their sin. The preacher/teacher will have to just preach Jesus and Him crucified, for change to take place. “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever” (Heb. 13:8). KJV Just preach Jesus.

6. “The Pauline Epistles,” Bible.org, The Pauline Epistles | Bible.org
<https://bible.org/seriespage/4-pauline-epistles>

WHAT IS HAPPENING TO THE TRADITIONAL CHURCH

From the days of Pentecost, with the twelve disciples and a few Apostles it has been seen how these men and women brought about a dramatic change in the world simply preaching and teaching about one Jesus. But today, Jared Wilson challenges the churches to action that “we ought to recover the roots of real Christianity before those who care are too few to do anything useful about it.”⁷ He provides six trends the real church might take into consideration which factor into the problems which the Contemporary church faces. Four are listed here:

1. Pastors are increasingly hired for their management skills or rhetorical ability over and above their biblical wisdom or their meeting of the biblical qualifications for eldership. (They can be both great speakers and great students of Scripture; and they can both attract crowds and proclaim the gospel. The problem is that, while they are not mutually exclusive, the latter qualities in each contrast have lost priority and consequently have lost favor. We have not prospered theologically or spiritually when we emphasize the professionalization of the pastorate.) 2. The equating of “worship” with just one creative portion of the weekly worship service and 3. The prevalent eisegesis in Bible study classes and small groups. (One reason we have struggled to develop fully devoted followers of Jesus is that we incorrectly assign our terminology (equating worship with music only) and thereby train our people to think in truncated, reductionistic ways. In the process of examining the text and “drawing out” its true meaning, the application supplants interpretation in the work of Bible study, so it has become less important to see what the Bible means and more important to make sure the Bible is meaningful to us. 4. Biblical illiteracy. (Our people don’t know their Bible very well, and this is in large part the fault of a generation of wispy preaching and teaching (in the church and in the home). Connected to this factor is the church’s accommodation and assimilation of the culture’s rapid shifting from text-based knowledge to image-based knowledge.)⁸

There are some trends that are impacting the decline of Churches especially when it comes to the Traditional church across America. But those Contemporary churches are also not

7. Jared C. Wilson, “6 Destructive Trends Happening in Your Church,” biblestudytools.com, www.biblestudytools.com › Bible Study › Explore the Bible 6 Destructive Trends Happening in Your Church / Bible Study

8. Jared C. Wilson, “6 Destructive Trends Happening in Your Church,” biblestudytools.com,

able to stand as strong because of the lack of foundational teaching. Here are a few reasons:

1. “The demographic remapping of America.
2. Technology. (Technology is changing everything we do, including how we “do” church. Instead of embracing the technology and adapting their worship experiences to include the technology, scores of traditional churches, mainline Protestant, and almost all Catholic churches do not utilize the very instruments that, without which, few Millennials would know how to communicate or interact. However, when I suggest to pastors and priests, that they should use social media, most of the ministers look at me as if I’ve lost my mind. What they should be more concerned about is why the Millennials have little or no interest in what they have to say.)
3. Leadership Crisis (clergy abuse, the cover-up by the Church)
4. Competition
5. Religious Pluralism
6. The ‘Contemporary’ Worship Experience
7. Phony Advertising”⁹

The complaints from this generation are seemingly accurate when it comes down to what ‘truth seekers’ are looking for when they attend church. You have to admit when you see the ‘falling away’ in all churches, that something is going wrong and in need of fixing. The problem is not bound by any certain community or denomination but it exists across America. What people see when they enter the churches of this era, they are not comfortable with and are often repelled by what they see and hear when they get there. So many times they refuse to attend. This issue is in the small and the so called mega churches. The believers are in search of a good meal with which to feed their souls weekly and the unbelievers are just in search of truth, which neither can find. How and when will the Church begin to provide what the world is in search of? These are desperate days and the answer to this puzzle does not appear to be close at hand. Still one may ask, what is the ‘missing piece’ to this puzzle?

9. Steve McSwain, “Why Nobody Wants to Go to Church Anymore Huffpost, <https://www.huffingtonpost.com/steve-mcswain/why-nobody-wants-to>. (accessed November 15, 2017).

What Paul saw, he wrote in his letters. One of his purposes was to present a complete and detailed statement of the gospel message God had called him to proclaim. In his teaching he admonished, rebuked, encouraged and charged those who would believe, to live a holy life. He did not bring condemnation but the understanding of what it meant to man, he brought hope, instruction, and the standards held in righteousness through Christ Jesus.

The church can't give up now as they have come too far and the end of time as the church knows it is drawing to a close. So the church should know from a traditional stand point, that one of the keys is prayer. They need to prayer for the restoration of the real church, to bring them back to the place where God has called them to be today and in the coming days. The question is, can the church Contemporary and Traditional be saved?

LIVING ON THE EDGE

As we live in this fast pace society, the church has also stepped up its game plan. It is simply understood that in order to appeal to this high powered culture it must make Christianity attractive and palatable to this generation, while endeavoring to still link some traditional aspects of religiosity. The church world needed to incorporate its belief systems and interpret the Scriptures and its Biblical principles without damaging or compromising the Word of God. But it has been a task that has brought the church close to the edge.

As the older members watched closely over this sensitive area they knew it would be a difficult task in ministry to distinguish and dialogue between their wisdom and the strength of theological liberalism. The Pastors, preachers and teachers have now the ominous task of setting the stage for these truth seekers to pattern. Developing a message that is not too strict for their public to hear and agree with, but the creating a methodology that also does not place the Word of God in true obscurity. They will have to be present with clarity a doctrine that reveals Jesus to

unbelievers, so they make the decision “to come out from among them” that they can be “in this world and not of it.” However this has not seemed to be the road they have chosen. Of sorts they have become trendy, looking to meet what is a ‘felt need’ and not the need that will be satisfied for an eternity. It is an edgy agenda that represents a line of helpful talks that are inclusive of this generation and the standards of the New Testament and Pauline texts. “And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42). KJV

Webster writes “if we are serious about the power of the Holy Spirit, we are going to be living constantly on the threshold of God’s new and powerful work. We will not only have to live with change, ambiguity and opposition: we will want to, just as the early church did in Acts. The church was not meant to be a stagnant, tradition-bound institution but a dynamic, Christ-centered household of faith.”¹⁰ If the church wants to be powerful again they must stand up and stand out and then count the cost. This can be done when the church understands building a church on Christ rather than just being concerned with gathering church members and not the making of disciples, or the marketing aspect for monetary gain and deceptive agendas. Because of the powerful message of Jesus Christ the church should be aware that “it can make the gospel interesting without entertaining, and convicting without condemning...It is a place where peer pressure, self-centeredness, anonymity and affluence are resisted.”¹¹ The contemporary church cannot waiver in its course but must stand on the tenets of the faith in Christ Jesus. They must

10. Douglas D. Webster, *Selling Jesus: What's Wrong with Marketing the Church* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Pub, 2009), 11

11. Douglas D. Webster, *Selling Jesus*: 13

not remain lukewarm in their decisions, but steadfast according to the power that works inside of it. As the Scriptures clearly tell us:

¹¹ Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

¹³ He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. ¹⁵ I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. ¹⁶ So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth” (Rev. 3:11,13,15-16). KJV

The Contemporary church needs to raise its consciousness taking us back to the faithful and what are the standards and the commands of Jesus. The church first needs to know what is required of them in order that they may bring the unbelievers into the realm of safety and out of the grips of Satan’s trickery and temptations and bring liberty in the Spirit. The author Barna notes that “oblivious to the deteriorating spiritual condition of our country, the church is losing ground to the secular alternatives. The ‘encroachment of secularism’ and the reversal of values from spiritual to material are catching us off guard.”¹² In his book he also discusses the kind of Pastors and leaders which should be leading the flock are accountable, discerning people of God who spend much time in prayer They should be bringing ‘impactful messages’ to the people which lead them not to edgy public opinions but to confessions about ‘who Jesus is’ and be compelled to follow Him.

When they understand that the drawing card to this fast paced society of truth seekers and millennials is to preach Jesus only and to bring the message that will lead them to the way of the cross. Following any other methodology than lifting Jesus out of the pages of New Testament Scriptures and the Pauline texts leads to a generation of limited and confused people who cannot answer the same question Jesus asked of His disciples, “But Whom say ye that I am?”

12. George Barna, *The Frog in the Kettle: What Christians Need to Know About Life in the Year 2000*(Ventura, Calif., U.S.A.: Regal Books, 1990), p. 22

(Mark8:29) KJV Webster adds that “Biblical preaching was God-centered, sin-exposing, self-convicting and life-challenging the direct opposite of today’s light, informal sermons that Christianize self-help and entertain better than the convict.”¹³ It tells us that many preaching styles are just simply motivational speaking and not Bible based sermons.

The church should seek to cause it’s participants to gather to worship a ‘sovereign’ God who is worthy not based on how we feel or on our personal experiences whether they are good or bad, but find the need to communicate to this generation that God requires everyone to worship Him in spirit and truth for Who He is and what He has done. Scripture says, “But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:23-24). KJV As the Contemporary church seeks to be tolerant of all lifestyles, they have also come too close to crossing the line where its members find no difference or separation to living a holy lifestyle. Then they tend to gain members that are clueless regarding the evangelical movement and believe in this palatable gospel which has no Apostolic doctrine, heritage, standards, foundations or tenets of the faith.;

IS THE MESSAGE OF JESUS CHANGING?

We should ask ourselves a few questions as it relates to the original message of Jesus. Begin with, ‘what has happened to the strong calls for repentance that would bring so many running to the altar crying ‘what must I do to be saved?’ ‘Has the cross where Jesus died, lost its power to save?’ ‘Where has the outpouring of the Holy Spirit gone?’ ‘Do we tarry for the power of the Holy Spirit as Jesus commanded His disciples to be in one place and on one accord when

13. Douglas D. Webster, *Selling Jesus*: p.48

the power fell?’ Is it just a fable that when Peter preached that day 3,000 souls were added to the church?’ Once a person received Christ there was the ‘Great Commission’ to ‘go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.’ (Mark 16:15). KJV Did Jesus actually mean that the church should do that today? ‘What happened to the miracles we saw as Jesus and His disciples do as they moved about from place to place, or doesn’t the Contemporary church have that kind of faith? Were the play by play narratives of the Gospels and the encouragements, teachings, and corrections from the Pauline texts not relative for this generation? What is really wrong with the Church and why is the Word not reaching this generation with the power of the Holy Spirit?

At times when it was thought that the Gospel message was too harsh and not being well received, some decided to make changes. “Where once the church emphasized God’s perfect holiness, now they emphasized His abundant love. Where the church emphasized obedience, now they emphasized success. Where the church emphasized sin, now they emphasized happiness. Where they focused on God’s demands, now they emphasized man’s specialness and abilities.”¹⁴ As this was done people began to come to church again but as years went by, they began to see that people were ‘not growing deep in their faith,’ and disciples were not being made.

Getting the message out there, Wilson cites S. Morgenthauer who says, “worship is witness and witness is worship. The theological point is sound; when believers are engaged in

14. Jared C. Wilson, *The Prodigal Church: a Gentle Manifesto Against the Status Quo* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), p 32

the worship of God this worship communicates to a lost world who God is and what He has done.”¹⁵ The message of this worship becomes evangelism, which is a desired effect.

As this research has been observing from the many writing, one can almost see the consensus leads you to believe that the message is the same, but the manner in which the message has been delivered has been altered. The emphasis of the message seems to have shifted into a negative light. Not only has the message been altered, but the attitude and the agenda of the deliverer has also been replaced by greed, the pride of life and by blasphemers.

METHODOLOGY OF THE CONTEMPORARY CHURCH

“We don’t think biblically about these matters, because we’re thinking largely along the lines of “what works?” and consequently we might make a big splash with our productions but not produce much faith. The source of all of these factors, if they may be reckoned accurate, is a fundamental misuse of the Bible by the leaders entrusted with preaching and teaching it. And the grand result of all of these factors is that as our churches get larger, our message keeps shrinking. We fill our buildings with scores and scores of people, but we’ve reduced the basic message to fit the size of an individualistic faith.”¹⁶

Does the Contemporary church need some good instruction in order to fulfill God’s calling and their mission? It is the strong belief of this paper that the church in need of a little more Biblical help. It is not that difficult once the Scripture is read to be able to follow that

15. Jared C. Wilson, *The Prodigal Church*: p. 10

16. Jared C. Wilson, “6 Destructive Trends Happening in Your Church,” biblestudytools.com, www.biblestudytools.com › Bible Study › Explore the Bible 6 Destructive Trends Happening in Your Church / Bible Study

instruction, liken onto the call of the disciples when Jesus asked them to “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.” It was a task they accomplished during His three and a half year ministry on earth and one they continued after He left.

Some of His last instructions if they are read closely should be clearly understood. “He didn’t say ‘Organize a political action committee.’ He didn’t say ‘Remember to work for justice and visualize world peace.’ He didn’t say ‘Be tolerant of on one another,’ ‘Save the whales,’ ‘Celebrate diversity,’ or ‘Commit random acts of kindness,’ or “Arm yourselves and take dominion over Rome.”¹⁷

What He did say when they had come together asking?:

“Lord will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? And He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you: and you shall be witness to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:6-8). Then in Matthew He said, And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen (Matt 28:18-20) KJV

CHANGING THE WAY WE DO CHURCH – METHOD OR MADNESS

“You do what you do because lost people need to know Christ: your way of worship style and preaching style and your entire mode of “doing church” comes from the desire to reveal the loving heart of God for those spiritually far from Him. You want lost people to be saved and found people to walk more closely with Him.”¹⁸

17. David Jeremiah, *Jesus' Final Warning: Hearing the Savior's Voice in the Midst of Chaos* (Nashville: W Pub Group, 1999), 118.

18. Jared C. Wilson, *The Prodigal Church*: p 20

HOW WILL THE CONTEMPORARY CHURCH BE HELPFUL WHILE WAITING
ON CHRIST RETURN?

A Wake Up Call to Believers

Kinnaman states that this nation's population is increasingly resistant to Christianity, especially to the theologically conservative expressions of that faith. "The critics of the faith are becoming bolder and more vocal and the aversion and hostility are crystallizing in the attitudes of millions of young Americans. If we don't wake up to these realities and respond in appropriate, Godly ways, we risk being increasingly marginalized and losing further credibility with millions of people. Despite their frustrations they are still working hard to believe the best about the faith."¹⁹ As we can tell from all the events that are taking place in this country and around the world the church is in trouble as they have been asleep. It is time to do our due diligence as some can see what is working and what is not. The souls of the young people are at stake and the parents, the church, the body of Christians must get on one accord and preach and teach Jesus in a way that unbelievers especially young people will understand.

Law and Gospel helps as Peter writes In your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect' (1 Peter 3:15) "The whole point of connecting well is to be able to share that hope that is in you and Jesus gives the Church this model in Matthew 18 where He explains how to seek after an unrepentant brother."²⁰

19. David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons, *Unchristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks About Christianity...and Why It Matters*, Reprint ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2012), pg. 39.

20. Ted Doering and Chelsey Doering, *Myth of the Millennial* pg. 49

Life Lessons from the Apostle Paul

- Be careful that your parenting is not deceptive (v.3)
- Be faithful in your stewardship as a parent. You have been entrusted as a parent and are called to preach the gospel to your family. (v4)
- Be sincere in your contentment. Make sure you don't choose money or fame over your family. (v5)
- Be humble. Don't allow the praise of man to compromise your relationship with God and your family. (v6)
- Be gentle and patient in understanding. Seek opportunities to immerse your youth in the teachings of Jesus. (v7)
- Be affectionate and willing to make sacrifices for your family. (v 8)
- Be a good example of a hard worker who isn't a burden to anyone. (v9)
- Be blameless in your family. (v10)
- Be consistent in encouraging, comforting, and exhorting your youth to live worthy of God, not you. (vv 11-12)²¹

The Contemporary Church has much work to do until Jesus Christ returns you should work the works of Him who told you to go. Watch, wait and listen for the sound. He is closer than you think and closer than before. Church, take your position as you look through the eyes of the Pauline texts, and take your stand with confidence because the Lord that saved you will keep you. "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen. (Jude 24-25) KJV

21. Alex McFarland and Jason Jimenez, *Abandoned Faith: Why Millennials Are Walking Away and How You Can Lead Them Home* (Carol Stream, IL:: Focus on the Family, 2017), 239.

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