

REVIVAL BEGINS WITH REPENTANCE

Through the years, many people have turned away from Christianity because of being disappointed in their church. Having given much thought to what is decaying most churches, I believe that the Bible is clear regarding this catastrophe, and in all humility, let me share these facts with you.

Being disconnected to God

In I Corinthians 2:14, we read that those who do not have the Spirit of God do not accept the things from God because such apprehensions are foolishness to them. The church was meant to be an institution that would bring people to understand and discover spiritual truths, yet many who have gone to church for years still know very little about the things of God.

Refusing to change

Through the years, many people have spoken out or written articles challenging churches toward change, but so far, few...if any...have responded with positive change. You may ask “Why not?” Again, the Bible has the answer when stating that the God of this age has blinded the people so that they cannot see the error of their ways (II Corinthians 4:4). Jesus, Himself, spoke of the church in His time, describing it as hearing but not understanding, as seeing but not perceiving (Matthew 13:14-15).

Leaning on pet beliefs

Many churches have blended their own theology into that of the Bible, but the Bible itself warns us not to lean on our own understanding but in all our ways follow God’s direction (Proverbs 3:4-5). Through our submission and humility toward God, we gain continually better insights and proper direction (Proverbs 9:10). Concerning spiritual matters, our natural mind will always lead us in the wrong direction because, deep down, it is hostile to the things of God (Romans 8:6, 8).

Disobedience to the Word of God

A healthy church is made up of people whose minds are open to further insights in the things God teaches in His Word. From time to time, true believers will see their shortcomings and will be open to new direction or change.

The Bible is a God-inspired book that is meant to teach us God’s ways, rebuke us for our wrongs, and help us on our spiritual journey (II Timothy 3:16). Those who obey biblical truth will be directed by God’s spirit (John 14:15). Those who say, “We believe,” but do not obey the Bible’s instructions are liars (I John 2:4-6). Of those “liars,” the Bible says that they are worshipping God in the wrong temples—temples promoting the ideas of men rather than teaching the Word of God (Mark 7:6-8). Because they are not connected to Him, Jesus spoke of those “worshippers” as offering lip service, while their hearts are far from Him (Matthew 15:8).

Failing to see the purpose of the true church

The essential nature of a New Testament church is to present biblical views so that believers may grow in their spiritual life and follow Jesus’ instructions. The true church is not a system invented or controlled by men, but the true church is a body formed by believers who continue Christ’s ministry on earth. The true church is not a club we join, but the true church is the body of Christ, and we become a part of that body when Christ’s Spirit lives in us.

The prime ministry of the church is a ministry of reconciliation (II Corinthians 5:18-19), a ministry of teaching believers to live blameless lives in a deceitful world (Philippians 2:15), a ministry of teaching believers to observe and follow Jesus’ instructions (Matthew 28:19-20).

Note: This article is based on the book, *Church on the Rock(s)*. It can be obtained by contacting the author’s website: www.RichardOostra.com

