

Essays & Ideas

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January, 2014

#97, An Essay

How Contemporary Churches Have Hurt Good Churches

The wave of pastors selling their churches into the Contemporary Church Movement just to fulfill their own fleshly desires has pretty much passed. Unable to actually **build** churches, contemporary preachers (“Con-men”) kidnapped thriving churches just because **they** enjoyed the things of the world too much and refused to say no to their own flesh. But most of the defectors have defected by now. In fact, all over the country Contemporary Churches are experiencing reduced crowds and financial tight times. Why? You can preach a “Come as you are. Stay as you are” gospel but it doesn’t fulfill the spiritual need man has. Some Con-men have turned to Calvinism in hopes of convincing their dead sheep that they’re theologians. All for naught. A spiritual desert is a spiritual desert **even if they use the King James Bible**.

Unfortunately, the effects of this great falling away will never be completely reversed. Even in our churches there is a residual “Contempo” shockwave. Here’s what we’ve seen in many **good churches**:

1. Dress Standards: During the falling away we watched dress standards fall all across the country. It’s as though good Christians said, “Look Pastor, I know the contemporary movement is wrong and I’m not going to leave and go to a contemporary church...but I’m not dressing up for church anymore either. You’ll just have to be glad you still have me here.”

2. Our Teens: Across the country we see churches with **no young people**. They quietly sat with their parents in a Bible believing church until they were old enough to take charge of their lives and then bolted to the local flesh-pot church where no sacrifice was required. It has split families. But then, Con-men never did care about the damage they wreaked on God’s people as long as they got one more carnal disciple.

3. Preaching: Bible preaching has always been foundational to Bible believing churches. But, slowly, even good people have absorbed the contemporary attitude that preaching should be softer and less “judgmental.” It’s what the Bible predicted as “they will not endure sound doctrine.”

Also, our folks don’t want to be in church any **more** or any **longer** than they absolutely have to. They want shorter sermons that are more soothing than convicting.

4. Life’s Goal: It used to be that Bible believers desired to please the Lord with their lives. But the “Live Your Best Life” philosophy has seeped in. Even Bible believers want to just enjoy life. They are willing to sacrifice **no worldly pleasure** for the Lord. There was a time when a Christian who wasn’t living for the Lord was at least **convicted** about it. They were wrong, knew it & were ashamed of it. Today their attitude is, “Tough luck! I’m enjoying life while I can.” And they are! It isn’t even a general surrender to **sin**. It’s just a self-centered, “I love myself” attitude that stubbornly refuses to stand out or take a hit for Christ. They go to church to fulfill their religious obligation to their Saviour...**but that’s all He gets!**

What can we do about it? Not much. Oh, we Preachers can determine to “Scald the Sheep!” but they’ll just leave. They are not going to be **driven** back to the fold.

Nor will surrendering to their carnality by softening the message help. It will only cause them to take the next logical step even farther away from God.

All we can do is what we were called to do...stay in the Bible and preach the Word! Feed the flock, don’t beat the flock. Edify the Saints as best you can & hope they’ll fall more in love with their Saviour than they are with themselves.