

Done With “Church”

Neil Gizzard

It would seem that still another significant segment of people are yet again abandoning the “church” and, once again, it is only right to call for a questioning of motives. That is, why are these people leaving the “church”? Some are making a distinction between those who are done with “church” but not Jesus (the “dones”) and those who believe themselves to be called out and away from the “church” (the “called outs”) – and it is in this distinction that we can see an important difference.

It is not all that hard to get dissatisfied at “church.” If the speaker is boring, the services dull, the children’s “ministry” inadequate or outmoded, etc. it is not very hard to pick up and leave and go find another “church” down the road where things are more suitable to one’s tastes and preferences. This does nothing to liberate these poor souls and is indeed merely another lap around the track of “church” frustration and bondage. But this new exodus is not just “church” hopping – that has long been an acceptable practice in “church” circles that hardly raises eyebrows anymore because it cannot be stopped, at least not in a free country. What is going on is yet another real and final exodus that is dwindling the already shrinking “church” gene pool.

There are undoubtedly many reasons for leaving any particular “church” but it is very possible, however, that these people are simply dissatisfied with the way things are done and they are leaving simply because it’s not the way they want it to be. One thing we really need to ask ourselves is: are we done with the “church” because of the putrid smell of death that surrounds so much of what it does or are we done because we’re not in charge and getting our way? The truth may not be pleasant to learn but if there is envy and self-seeking in our hearts, we must not lie against the truth (Jas. 3:14) but rather we must confess our sins to our loving heavenly Father who has been working to bring us to a clearer recognition of the unrighteousness and lawlessness in our own hearts.

But consider the other part of this group – the “called outs.” These have left the “church” because they specifically believe they have heard a call from God to come out and be separate from the “Christian” idolatry and “Babylonian” influences so prevalent at “church.” (see 2 Cor. 6:17-18, 1 Cor. 5:11, Rev. 18:4) These are coming out because they are obeying God. This is a significantly different motivation from simply being dissatisfied with “church.”

We must be quick to notice too that many who have been called out are also done with “church” – that is, they fit into both categories. This is simply reflective of the free will that God has given us – that is, these have chosen to obediently come out both because they want to obey God and because their soul is vexed because of the lawlessness that abounds around them. In fact, it is the underlying desire to do the will of God that enables us to see when and where the speaker up front has departed from the truth (Jn. 7:17) and whether the “wisdom” that is exercised is divine, earthy, sensual or even demonic. (Jas. 3:15) It is the pursuit and performance of the will of God that brings us deeper into God’s kingdom. (Mt. 6:10) Being done and coming out is simply the combination of our will and His will in this matter of “church.”

This being both done and called out is also the opposite side of the “coin” of the “strong delusion” that God sends upon those who don’t love the truth. (2 Ths. 2:11-12) Just as God cements those who persistently prefer unrighteousness into their trajectory

toward destruction, so too He cements those who persistently prefer His righteousness above all else into their progression toward Him. As the “church” departs more and more from the true faith of following Christ and God (even as they retain His name – much as an adulteress can retain her married name even as she pursues various affairs with men other than her husband), the contrast will become more and more apparent to those who have eyes to see and ears to hear.

Make no mistake – at best, the “church” is a privately run social club. Only those whom the owners and managers approve of are allowed to participate in steering the ship. Even Christ and God are often excluded from giving direction. Only those activities and events that draw people into (and under!) the “church” are considered worthwhile investments – furthering the kingdom of God, especially if it doesn’t bring in some kind of material or emotional reward, is unthinkable at “church.”

The thought that often doesn’t occur immediately to most people who are done with “church” and who are called out and away from the error and apostasy of the “church” is that there are still elements of deception and error embedded within their own hearts, lives, souls and spirits. Put simply, it is very easy to leave the “church” but it is very difficult and a laborious process to get all of the “church” out of one’s self. Wanting to have the preeminence of even a small assembly is as old as Diotrephes (3 Jn. 9) and this sin is more prevalent in the house “church” and “organic” movement than one would expect. Nor are gossips and busybodies a new thing (1 Ths. 3:11-12) and they are as much a problem in a house “church” or “organic” situation as they are to the well-oiled, smooth running “church” machinery.

To put it bluntly, the flesh – which loves to appear religious and spiritual – can be as much with us in our choice of “churches” as it is in our choice to leave a “church.” It is our responsibility to “purify ourselves of *all* filthiness of the flesh and spirit” if we are to walk in the promises that God will truly be our Father. (2 Cor. 6:18-7:1) If we sow to (invest in the life of) the flesh, we will of the flesh reap corruption and death but if we sow to (invest in the life of) the spirit, we will of the Spirit reap life abundant and everlasting. (Gal. 6:8, Jn. 10:10)

It is not enough, however, to leave (or stay!) at a “church” just because that is what pleases *us*. That is still lawlessness, doing what is right in our own eyes because we have no true King except ourselves. (see Jdgs. 21:25) For those who are done with “church,” it is important that you let go of your own feelings and preferences and seek out God’s leading in the matter. It is most unlikely that God will call you to remain in the place of the dead while you seek the living. But He will have you remain there as long as it takes (or to return, if necessary) for you to become as sick of the smell of putrid death as He is. And He will keep you in the wilderness (seeming or actual isolation) for as long as it takes to purify you of the “church” contaminants that remain within your life.

But don’t suppose that the wilderness time has to last forever or even to the end of your life. Though it is a mistake of huge proportions to avoid learning the lessons of any aspect of the wildernesses that Christ might lead us through, there *is* a corporate way of following Christ. Many times, though – and especially while in the wilderness – this corporate way might seem more like a theory than a reality. But until we learn to follow Christ as mature individuals committed to His kingdom of light and truth, what hope have we of coming together in anything other than in the merely human characteristic of gathering only with those who are likeminded and snubbing those who think differently

than we do? We must learn to discern others according to the Spirit of Christ (2 Cor. 5:16) and, if Christ has received that other person and there is the tiniest of discernible fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23) in their life, who do we think we are to turn them away as if they were not our brother or sister in Christ? Just because someone else doesn't agree with every little thing we think or believe is not sufficient grounds to break off fellowshiping with them.

The "church" is built upon a great number of carnalities that we have inadvertently carried away with us in our exodus from the building and institution, carnalities that have served us in varying degrees in our life in this world. But we will not be able to carry those with us into eternity and remain with Christ and God – Christ is determined to present to Himself a bride (and not a prostitute!) who is "not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but... holy and without blemish." (Eph. 5:27) Only those who do the will of God in this life are allowed to remain in His kingdom – those who do only what is right in their own eyes, lawlessness, are those who are eternally excluded. (Mt. 7:21-23)

Being done with "church" is a good thing because it opens up the way for us to go into the wilderness where we can learn to become true followers of our King and Messiah. Coming out of the spiritual adultery, idolatry and apostasy of the "church" is a good thing because it means we have at least learned the necessity of seeking the purity and righteousness that is Christ and God. Perhaps the most important revelation the people of Christ need to learn is the very significant differences between modern "churchanity" and the original New Testament ekklesia ([1577] the Greek word inappropriately translated as "church.") It is perhaps the most important resolve to gain in this time and season that we will no longer help anyone play "church" in any way even as we resolve to bend over backwards, even lay down our life, to help anyone who needs our help in their genuine walk with Christ. Anything less is simply another lap around the track of "church" frustration and bondage as we succumb to the hidden elements of "church" deception and error still secretly embedded deep within our hearts, lives, souls and spirits. It is not enough to be done with "church" or to even come out – we must get "church" out of us.

Let he who has ears hear.

Neil Girrard
Paidion Books
P.O. Box 327
Capitan, NM 88316

Website – www.paidionbooks.org
Email – paidion@paidionbooks.org
This article - <http://paidionbooks.org/girrard/church/dwc.html>