

But I Met God There

Neil Girrard

One of the most haunting objections to the truth about the “church” has to be this one: “But I really met God in a church!” That this is so is not to be denied. But having met God within the environment of a “church” is not the same as saying that He designed it, that He had it built or that He is interested in prolonging its life. Because God has allowed the wheat and the tares to grow to maturity simultaneously and because the kingdom has become leavened throughout (Mt. 13:29-30, 33), there may be any combination of elements of the true ekklesia interspersed with “church” lies and traditions which war against the work of God in bringing the sons of God, His children, to maturity.

It is in the very fact that certain aspects of the “church” are actually antagonistic to spiritual growth in Christ that we can see that God could not possibly be the architect and designer of the “church.”

- When a mixed multitude of believers, pseudo-believers, mis-believers and non-believers is catered to, spiritual growth will always be hampered. True disciples have to be personally taken up on the mountainside or off to the side of the road so that the deeper things of the kingdom of God might be imparted to them.
- When thousands or millions of dollars is spent to provide places where “empty worship” is offered up to God - while orphans and widows remain in their distress - someone is practicing religion that is quite different from what God considers “acceptable and pure.” (Jas. 1:27)
- When people claiming to be Christians but who secretly and regularly practice fornication, covetousness, idolatry, gossip, alcoholism, blackmail, etc. (1 Cor. 5:11) are welcome at every “Sunday morning worship service,” someone is turning a blind eye to clear commands of Scripture.
- When God provides five types of ministering servants (spiritual giftings - Eph. 4:11-13) to be nested in a framework of elders and deacons (spiritual maturity - Phlp. 1:1; Acts 20:28) but the “church” has a top-down bureaucratic authority structure common to secular corporations, someone is practicing a gospel that is different from that of the New Testament.
- When a man regularly stands above the same crowd and tells them what he thinks God is saying, his very position and actions speak of his superiority over the average congregant. When the crowd expects him to regularly hear God for them and to make decisions for them, he has become a Nicolaitan - something which God hates. (Rev. 2:6, 15)

It is precisely these elements of enmity against the ekklesia (and there are more) that are so deeply ingrained into the very fabric of “church” that reveals the “church’s” evil and Satanic origin. Yes, God has met many a people in “church.” But His work in their lives has not

centered around their attending a meeting to hear a sermon or even their participation in some “ministry.” His work in their lives has rather centered around teaching them to obey Him by loving the others He has placed in their life.

People have met God in very real ways under some very unusual circumstances. Some have been stone drunk in hotel bedrooms contemplating murder or suicide. Some have been in porno shops or whorehouses and realized the emptiness of their way of life. Some have been in bars or dance halls and realized that there must be something more to life. Many, many are those who were embroiled in some large-scale disaster - an earthquake, a tornado, a bombing, a battle - and their imminent brush with their own mortality caused them to realize their need for God. All these have cried out to God - and they were heard for “all who call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” (Rom. 10:13) But can it be said that God made any of these places? Did He design the hotel room, the porno shop, the whorehouse, the bar, the dance hall? And even though it could be said that God orchestrated or allowed the earthquake, tornado and war, why do we not create a religion out of those things? There is just as much justification for using any of those things as the center pieces of modern Christian religion as there is for using a “church” building. But because these things actually bring people to new life and cannot be replicated under regular religious conditions, it is not conducive to providing the atmosphere that most often produces complacent, compromised pseudo-Christians - the real goal of the demonic forces behind “church.”

It is a generally acknowledged observation in most denominational “churches” that 10% of the people do 100% of the work of and around the “church.” Where does that leave the other 90%? And what does it say about the underpinnings of such a construct that 90% of the people who come don’t learn enough about the ways of Christ to even learn basic servanthood. And may God have special mercy on those other abominations that don’t even make it to the 10% rule but still can’t recognize that they are part of the problem and not the solution!

God can be met in a “church” and someone can be a genuine believer and be in a “church.” But when this believer is presented with the truth about the “church” and turns his or her back on that truth because it goes against everything they’ve believed for so long and against everything they want to be true, then that person starts on a path of antagonism against God that is neither healthy nor wise.

Jesus said, “I am the way, the *truth*, and the life...” (Jn. 14:6) The truth is more than a set of facts. He is a Person. Not only is everything He says true but He is the very essence of truth. And it is in truth that we find freedom. (Jn. 8:32, 36)

No lie is of the truth. (1 Jn. 2:21) No practice or tradition that hinders our growth toward spiritual maturity or that keeps us from the complete liberty found in the Spirit of God - that liberty whereby His grace, that is, His power, enables us to become all that He intended we become - no such practice or tradition could possibly be of God. It is only a scheme of the devil designed to rob us of our inheritance as children of God. And if we are careless about our inheritance for too long, we may find that we are unable to inherit it - even though we cry out for it with tears. (see Heb. 12:14-17)

Let he who has ears hear.

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