

The 3C's of



Church Membership

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The 3C's of Church Membership

CONNECTION-COMMITMENT-COVENANT



The following are some thoughts that the church must begin to think and put into practice in order to fulfill the purposes that our LORD has for us here in the earth.

The church has been *Heaven oriented* and not *Kingdom oriented*. As a result, we have not allowed the 3C's pertaining to church membership to manifest in church life.

Heaven is real but we are not there yet. The Church has been translated into the Kingdom of God, which is here and now. Therefore, we must learn to operate in these 3C's for the Kingdom to be manifest in and through the Church.

Connection

The first “C” stands for *connection*. The word means the act of connecting or the state of being connected. If we understand this, then we can see, that first the LORD, through the new birth, connected us to Himself. These following verses will help:

- Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? (*1 Corinthians 6:15*)
- But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. (*1 Corinthians 6:17*)
- For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. (*Ephesians 5:30*)

We all are glad for this and readily agree and want to participate in this truth. The problem though, is that to connect to Him in a way that is right and fruitful we must recognize the fact that He intends and has ordained that we also be connected to each other in more than a cursory, superficial way. That is, we are to be joined together, connected as vitally as parts of your body are joined together.

Here are some verses that tell us this:

- ...so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. *(Romans 12:5)*
- And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually. *(1 Corinthians 12:26-27)*
- Therefore, putting away lying, "Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor," for we are members of one another. *(Ephesians 4:25)*

If the different parts of your body did not get along and walk together in agreement toward the same purpose then a doctor would say that there is something amiss either mentally or physically. He would say that your nervous system is not functioning to allow the different parts to communicate and connect to do the necessary functions or he would conclude that there was something physically wrong with various members that would not allow proper functioning.

In either case, we would say that this body is sick, diseased or malformed. It seems to me if we look at the church we can see some similarities. The basic problem is that we have not seen ourselves as needing to be connected vitally to others in the Church.

We have not been taught nor have we looked for ways to do this.

The scripture uses the analogy of constructing a building. This illustrates the connectedness that the LORD has ordained for the Church.

- Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit. (*Ephesians 2:19-22*)

The above scriptures contain the words *foundation, cornerstone, building, built* and *dwelling place*. Each of these words have to do with a building itself or the process of constructing a building. We can look further in the scripture and find even more on this thought.

- Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. (*1 Peter 2:4-5*)

Jesus is the Living Chief Cornerstone; we are living stones; being joined, connected together to the Chief Cornerstone and to each other in order to build the Temple for the LORD to dwell in. A building, whether it is built of wood, brick or stone, is not a building unless the different parts are connected together.

Suppose you have a foundation laid for a building and you have 10,000 concrete blocks delivered to the jobsite. When you survey the situation, you can truthfully say that you are in the building process; however, you do not have a building. You only have a foundation with a pile of blocks that can become a building. Unless and until the blocks are joined together, you really do not have a building. You only have the potential of a building.

Most of the Church today is in the potential stage. The truth is that the foundation, Jesus and the apostle and prophets, has been laid. However, in most cases the living stones are only in a pile not really connected together. We meet together but when we come together, we are only a pile of stones. We do not see ourselves as a connected, corporate body or dwelling place for the Living God.

The reason I say we do not see ourselves as a connected, corporate body is because we walk off from places that the LORD has put us. In addition, we have not allowed apostolic ministry to help place us as a mason

places stones in a wall. Paul gave us a clue to this in the following verse:

- According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. *(1 Corinthians 3:10)*

Commitment

The second “C” stands for *commitment*. Commitment means the act of being committed, “to commit oneself, is to do some act, or make some declaration, which may bind the person in honor, good faith, or consistency, to pursue a certain course of conduct, or to adhere to the tenor of that declaration”

If I am committed to the LORD, I am committed to HIS purposes and ways. I am committed to what HE does and where HE works, which is in and through HIS church.

- Do not fret because of evildoers, Nor be envious of the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, And wither as the green herb. Trust in the LORD, and do good; Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness. (*Psalms 37:1-3*)

The reason for folks worrying about what other people do or do not do is because their trust and commitment is not fully in the LORD but rather in the kingdom of this world. It also has to do with the fact that if you are committed to the LORD and HIS church then you are not in control.

A sure sign of not being committed is “fretting” over not being in control. When we trust HIM, we are also

committed to HIM, recognizing HE is in control of our lives and not us. I can live where HE places me and I can really feed on HIS faithfulness and not allow my circumstances to rule me.

- Therefore, gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; *(1 Peter 1:13-14)*

To be committed is a choice that you and I each must make; HE will not make it for me. When I choose to be committed to HIM, my mind is settled, and “the loins of my mind” are strengthened by the commitment to HIM.

The “loins of the mind” is the imagination, which is what causes most folk trouble. If I am fully committed to HIM then my imagination is strengthened, structured, and stabilized by my commitment to HIM. My enemy, satan, will not be able to use my imagination against me and defeat me with all kinds of fears or worries that I imagined with his help.

The scripture uses the phrase “hold fast” nine times in the New Testament. We will look at a few of these because if you hold fast to something you are committed to it.

- Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed to you, keep by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us. (*2 Timothy 1:13*)

We must be committed to the Word of God or hold fast to it at all times. Our words, deeds and attitudes declare whether or not we are holding fast to the Word of God that has been committed to us.

- Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. (*Hebrews 4:14*)
- Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. (*Hebrews 10:19-23*)

In the above verses, we find reference to Jesus as our High Priest twice and then two references to us holding fast to our confession (or being committed to our confession of faith).

Covenant

The third “C” is for *covenant*. God Almighty made a covenant with Abraham that has been fulfilled in Christ. The following verses tell us of this:

- Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise (covenant).
(Galatians 3:16-18)
- For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. *(Galatians 3:26-29)*

We would think it strange for Jesus to not be committed (hold fast) to HIS office of High Priest.

Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. *(Hebrews 2:17)*

Why would it not also be required of us to be committed and faithful (hold fast) to our place, position and responsibilities in the local church where the LORD has placed us?

How can I be holding fast to my confession if I do not remain committed to what He has called me to, even when things are not as I would have them or just downright unpleasant and difficult?

I think that we forget that commitment means “to commit ones self, is to do some act, or make some declaration, which may bind the person in honor, good faith, or consistency, to pursue a certain course of conduct, or to adhere to the tenor of that declaration.”

This could also be a definition of what it means to *hold fast!*

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Connection

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