

## Part 10: The Biblical Alternative

Church is an institution because it was founded in a church-state and for the express purpose of a church-state. As we have seen, with the departing of the two foremost apostles, Paul and Peter, notable leaders and disciples of the apostles began calling for a central religious authority to maintain the authority of the apostles. But, the apostles never operated by authority to begin with, and for that matter, nether did Christ. All these ministries were marked by leadership and skilled persuasion, not authority. Why? God's kingdom is not presently on earth; when it does come, indeed, God will rule the nations with a "rod of iron." Right now, we are merely ambassadors pointing to God's future kingdom and the hope thereof.

We "do church" the way we do because it was born out of the world's caste system and authority-lust that is the essence of sin. The Church Fathers sought a central church based in Rome because that was the epicenter of world power during that time. They chose one disciple to succeed the apostles and rule over the massive home fellowship network that existed during that time. This could well be the beginning of what the apostle Paul referred to as the great "falling away."

Meanwhile, they sought to replace the existing pagan-state with the church-state. Those who hijacked the ekklesia were hellbent on replacing the pagan-state as Rome's new lover in order to have their orthodoxy enforced by the state. It took their constant meddling in state affairs and treachery some 300 years to replace the pagan-state with the church-state beginning with Constantine. The Church Fathers had been integrating paganism into Christianity's identity for some time, and the model still practiced in church today was solidified during the time of Constantine and was modeled after pagan temple worship. This is by no means obscure history, and "church history" is truly just that and not the history of God's ekklesia.

In contrast, any true history concerning the ekklesia is VERY obscure by the church's design. No doubt, this is why the history of the early ekklesia is in the Bible and stands as the only real history we have of it. Furthermore, we are therefore not left without a true identity and mode of operation.

What evolved from the hijacking of the ekklesia was the Catholic Church which was the epitome of a church-state and sought unfettered world domination. Church history is a story of political intrigue and human slaughter unparalleled in human history. Eventually, some within the Church thought they could do church-state better resulting in the Protestant Reformation. The idea that theological differences spawned the Reformation is an absurd myth as theologians in the Church saw Scripture through a Platonist caste system. Early church documents show clearly that the contention was spawned by differences in opinion regarding social engineering for purposes of controlling the great unwashed, not some romantic defense of the Bible.<sup>1</sup> Again, it must be said that such a notion is patently absurd.

Furthermore, within the Protestant Reformation, the Puritans thought they could do church-state even better and sailed for America to create a Calvinist theocratic utopia. Hence, the first Bible to arrive on American shores was the Geneva Bible, a Calvinist commentary on the Bible. But at any

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<sup>1</sup> <https://paulspassingthoughts.com/2013/06/25/tanc-2013-susan-dohse-the-plato-augustine-calvin-connection/>

rate, it escapes one to ponder the zeal behind duplicating Geneva which was already unraveling due to its extreme despotism.

Authority has never brought about unity. And though a tacit nod towards individualism created a shining city on a hill called America, the book of Revelation makes it clear that mankind will return to the authority myth and create the most monstrous church-state of all time.

Thank God this is not our kingdom. Thank God we are presently free to recover the ekklesia.

**A body, not an institution; leadership and gifts, not authority; fellowship, not membership.**

An ekklesia is a fellowship of believers in Christ who gather together in private homes. But an ekklesia is a gathering of God's visible family members and not any particular place. Primarily, the purpose of the meetings are stated in the New Testament; fellowship, the breaking of bread together, Bible study, encouragement unto good works, and service to others.

Meeting in private homes and other non-institutional settings is vital because it is a visible statement concerning the gospel that ekklesia represents: justification by new birth as opposed to justification by faith alone. As shown prior, it is not by faith alone, but clearly, faith plus church authority. We believe in a literal new birth that baptizes us into God's literal family. Therefore, the ekklesia will look like, and feel like, an informal family gathering, but not without organization.

In addition, the ekklesia functions as a body and not a top-down authoritative institution. The body of Christ is made up of members who have their own unique gifts working together in a cooperative effort with Christ as the only head. The recognition of gifts, and how those gifts work together are key to being organized toward a common goal.

Salvation is not a process, but rather a settled issue via the new birth. Once a person is born again, he or she cannot be unborn. Nor is a birth a process, it is a onetime event. Once born of God; always God's child. The transformation of a person from "under law" to "under grace," from death to the quickening of the Spirit, and from darkness to light is a once and for all time finished work through the new birth. Hence, justification and sanctification are completely separate, and the standard for justification is the new birth and God in us, not the law. Once saved and sealed until the day of redemption by the Spirit, believers do, in fact, move on from our day of salvation to sanctified living.

The Bible is instruction for loving God and others using a literal plain sense interpretation and individual reason. In other words, a historical-grammatical interpretation. God uses His word to sanctify believers. Those who have the gift of teaching should be apt in persuading through the study of "sound doctrine." The Bible is wisdom for loving others and living a life worthy of God's family.

Authority is not a gift; all authority has been given to Christ. Judgment is between the individual and the one mediator between God and mankind, Jesus Christ. The ekklesia is a body with members cooperating together towards a common goal, and unity is increased as members agree more and more concerning the one mind of Christ in all born again believers. This is in contrast to a top-down authoritative caste system indicative of institutions.

"Membership" in an ekklesia is determined by fellowship. If you fellowship with the ekklesia, you are part of the ekklesia fellowship. There is no formal membership based on a written covenant which in reality, according to most state laws, is a binding contract and forfeits various personal rights. A person not living a life congruent to a member of God's household may be uninvited from fellowship until the behavior is corrected. This is not a judgment regarding the person's salvific standing.

Monetary giving is according to need. Tithing is not biblical. Infrastructure is supported by the normal use of families and their personal incomes. There are no paid positions of authority or support for institutional overhead. God's people operating as a family affords vast flexibility regarding world missions and other projects. The future vision is New Testament-like which is strength in numbers. Each city will have several home fellowships that make up a vast network worldwide. This is a strong focus on individual gifts working together for common purposes stated in the New Testament.

### **A cult?**

Invariably, due to institutional conditioning, this concern will arise. In contrast, a cult is defined by the combining of authority with faith. Any religious institution that claims a co-authority with Christ is a cult by definition. EVERY major cult in human history has flowed from institutional religion. One example is Jim Jones, an ordained pastor, and his "Peoples Temple." Authority has never prevented any cult or cult-like behavior, but in fact, is the source. The vast cult of personalities present in the institutional church of our day is the best example complete with its scandals and cover-ups.

There is a reason for this; when authority is truth, personal discernment is given over to that authority. Where authority is truth, leadership and reason are completely unnecessary. Authority as a prevention for chaos flowing from individual freedom is a misnomer to begin with. Among the so-called religious authorities there is disagreement, so individuals merely choose the authority that best suits them. Freedom of the individual is inescapable, and freedom of conscience results in far less chaos than institutional authority. Institutional authority has produced an innumerable amount of religions, denominations, and institutions. In contrast, if you think about it, families function naturally within a relatively unchaotic norm.

Does this mean institutions are unnecessary? No, but their purpose is pragmatic, and for the sole purpose of supporting the individual's pursuit of purpose, happiness, and liberty.

This is nothing new, but rather a model that will work in any geographical location under any political or economic conditions. Not only is the ekklesia model the only thing that will work in countries like China where the underground church exists, but we believe that it is, and always has been the intended New Testament model. Does it not make sense that God would design a method that wouldn't be hindered by any geographical condition?

A word needs to be added here about "home church." The contemporary church started midweek meetings in the homes of members sometime during the 1990s. This serves two purposes. First, it circumvents the allurements towards the ekklesia; "Oh, our church already has home fellowships."

Secondly, it gains more control over members. Typically, church authoritarians (as opposed to leaders) lead these meetings where people are more open about what they are really thinking due to the smaller setting and informality. This enables the authoritarians of the church to be privy to anyone who might cause dissention.

Then there are other home churches that are not connected with a formal church hierarchy, or the "institutional church," that are only opposed to the caste system but maintain traditional church orthodoxy. In other words, they maintain the church's false gospel while throwing out the authority. Unfortunately, any sort of biblical organization is also thrown out. Remember, a body is organized. These groups meet and are boastful about not having any idea about what is going to happen. To do any kind of planning would "hinder the Spirit" who is supposedly in total control of the meeting. Any kind of "Bible study" is a "prophetic" free-for-all from individuals who "receive a word from the Lord." Of course, this is exactly what the apostle Paul objected to regarding what was going on in Corinth.

The in-between version was the Congregationalism that came out of the Puritan invasion. It changed the government type but kept everything else in the Westminster Confession. It traded a socialist form of church government for a democracy form of church polity. Notice that "government" goes hand in hand with church; a fact that we rarely stop to consider. What can be concluded by the fact that some kind of government is part and parcel with church? Families have always operated just fine from the dawn of civilization without formal government. What we fail to ponder follows: love is not without organization and is unfettered by bureaucracy. In addition, control is not the motive, but the self-fulfillment one receives from loving God and others.

Prior to big government coming of age in history, clans achieved remarkable cultural accomplishments. A good example of this is Abraham who even went to war with governments and won. However, what people fail to recognize follows: the source of church tyranny is its doctrine. Throughout the history of church, people have sought to change the symptoms of tyranny in the church, that is, its government and mode of operation, but have never changed the ideology that drives the tyranny which is a soteriology based on caste. Remember, the core ideology is Dualism leading to additional mediators other than Christ determined by predestination and resulting in a functioning caste system. This construct is the root system for every religion that flowed out of the garden religion of "the knowledge of good and evil." ALL religions find their fundamentals in those principles. Church, which came along in the 4th century, is merely another version of the original article. It's curious that the founders of Americanism recognized the European church as "Platonic [sic] Christianity."<sup>2</sup> Plato's "Republic" articulated Dualism and applied it to social engineering.

Truly, the Spirit has not left us without the knowledge needed to return God's children to the ekklesia. While the framework is evident, what this can, and will eventually look like in our day is anyone's guess, but this we know: the Spirit ONLY uses TRUTH to sanctify (John 17:17). We

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<sup>2</sup> <https://paulspassingthoughts.com/2016/08/13/colonial-puritanism-was-commonly-known-as-platonic-christianity-5/>

the authors invite you on this journey in using the law of God lawfully, that is, in the way of love. And with the apostle Paul, we bow our knees to the Father that...

"according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."

This is in contrast to the church prayer that we would know the depths of our supposed condemnation for God's glory and thereby recognizing the size of chasm between us and our father illustrated by a bigger cross.

The church prayer is not our prayer because *we have not received the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear because fear has to do with judgment and not the way of love and its power following.*

The way of the ekklesia is aggressive love without fear of condemnation. We do not partake in fearful introspection because there is no law to condemn us. Our love for the law is aggressive and unfettered. The old us is dead, and even if the church digs up our dead corpse and drags it into court or their delusional sessions, the judge has no law; our beloved Brother nailed it to the cross and therefore....

...our allegiance is to Him, the only head of the body which is resurrected with Him, and the one who has been given ALL authority. We will believe on Him alone and not men; we will focus our lives together towards the day we stand before Him for our reward. We long to hear, "Well done faithful servant." So help us God.

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