

CHURCH: AMERICAN STYLE
Shipwrecked Faith from a Shipwrecked Church

“You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you saying,
‘This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far away from
Me. But in vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the
precepts of men.’”
Matthew 15:7-9

HEY, JUST WHOSE CHURCH IS IT ANYWAY?

From the lips of the Founder:

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” And they said, “Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.” He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” And Jesus said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.”
Matthew 16:13-18

Question:

Whose responsibility is it to build the church?

Answer:

Like, duh! Weren't you listening?

Follow-up Question:

But what about all our programs and our meetings and our slogans and all the other stuff we do to try to help Jesus out in building His church— I mean, what about all that? All the church growth pundits say it's the way to go.

Everybody's Somebody at our Church
Uplifting Music and Relevant Preaching
Meeting Your Needs Right Where You Are!
We Have Everything for Your Family!
You're Important to God and Important to Us!

From the pen of the Holy Spirit through John:

Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the (1) lust of the flesh and the (2) lust of the eyes and the (3) boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.
1 John 2:15-17

THE NEW TESTAMENT “SEEKER” CHURCH:

First, the problem:

It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone has his father's wife.
1 Corinthians 5:1

Next, the response of the “seeker” church:

You have become arrogant and have not mourned instead, so that the one who had done this deed would be removed from your midst.
1 Corinthians 5:2

Finally, the response of the “holy, God seeking” church:

For I, on my part, though absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged him who has so committed this, as though I were present. I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people; I did not at all mean with the immoral people of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters, for then you would have to go out of the world. But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he is an (1) immoral person, or (2) covetous, or (3) an idolater, or (4) a reviler, or (5) a drunkard, or (6) a swindler— not even to eat with such a one. For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Do you not judge those who are within the church? But those who are outside, God judges. Remove the wicked man from among yourselves.
1 Corinthians 5:3, 9-13

The Voice of Dismay from the “Seeker” Church:

My, how intolerant! We're just supposed to love everybody and not judge anybody. You know, don't ask and don't tell.