

General Topics :: Church of God? (the denomination)

Church of God? (the denomination) - posted by repentcanada, on: 2008/3/26 12:54

Does anyone know much of the Church of God, that would be willing to share with me? I have just heard of the church within the last month and am trying to understand their beliefs in theory and in practice.

<http://www.churchofgod.org/>

Thank you,
Ricky

Re: Church of God? (the denomination), on: 2008/3/26 13:20

My experience has been that the Church Of God is somewhere between the Assemblies of God and Pentecostal Holiness. They preach Biblical salvation, but put an unscriptural emphasis on tongues and prophecy. Depending on the individual church there can be some legalism like what's found in the Holiness churches.

It's a very prevalent denomination here in the South, but I'm not sure about the rest of the US.

Some snake handling churches call themselves "Church of God", but there does not appear to be any link at all between them and the denomination. Most snake handling churches don't belong to any denomination at all, and are extremely independent... and are cults, obviously.

That's what I know about them.

Christian, certainly. Over the edge on some things... yep.

Krispy

Re: - posted by repentcanada, on: 2008/3/26 13:56

thanks brother Krispy, I am up here in Edmonton, Canada and the fellowship here has nothing to do with the things you have stated.

I really appreciate your comments,
Ricky

Re: - posted by ccchhrrriiisss (), on: 2008/3/26 14:22

Hi Ricky...

My parents and I used to attend a Church of God (Cleveland, TN) congregation in central Tennessee. Like Krispy said, the Church of God is a lot like the Assemblies of God -- except that they are typically a little more reminiscent of the classical AG churches. They are classical Pentecostals in both doctrine and practice (particularly in regard to holiness and the baptism of the Holy Spirit). The denomination (or "fellowship" as they prefer) actually predates the Assemblies of God (which was founded in 1914). The Church of God started as a loose evangelical/holiness sect that adapted its Pentecostal aspect several years later.

The Church of God's (http://www.churchofgod.org/about/declaration_of_faith.cfm) Declaration of Faith illustrates the common creed of the adherents. However, the Church also offers a glimpse into its (http://www.churchofgod.org/about/mission_vision.cfm) Mission and Vision, as well as codes for (http://www.churchofgod.org/about/practical_commitments.cfm) Practical Commitments and (http://www.churchofgod.org/about/doctrinal_commitments.cfm) Doctrinal Commitments (which are simply suggestions for practical living and a rationale for doctrines).

From my personal view, the local Church of God congregations resemble classic Pentecostalism -- but with very conservative views on dress, music, etc... Whereas many large AG congregations resemble some of the large Megachurch

es (in administration, activities, worship, charismatic practice, etc...), the larger Church of God fellowships that I have attended are far less "modern" (in regard to music, activities, etc... -- if that makes sense). The medium-sized congregation that my parents attended (of about 750) were very strict (at least in unwritten codes) in regard to music (no drums, guitars, very little upbeat music, etc... in that church), dramas (they didn't happen), evangelism (preaching only) and dress (wear your "Sunday best"). The services were almost always devoid of neo-Pentecostal and charismatic "manifestations" (such as being "slain in the spirit" or verbatim words of "prophecy," as well as "holy laughter" or "dancing in the spirit") which have become quite commonplace or acceptable in many moderate to larger AG churches that I have visited. In fact, most of the Church of God congregations that I have attended hardly resembled AG or neo-Pentecostal churches at all in that aspect.

Like the smaller and more traditional Assemblies of God congregations, many of the Church of God fellowships that I visited often utilized the wall banners and teaching material offered by the Church headquarters (in Cleveland, Tennessee). In addition, most of the local congregations seem to emphasize home and foreign mission efforts. My parents' congregation supported more missionaries than one would expect from a moderate-sized congregation. The congregation still sang from a hymnal, still had separate "prayer rooms" and still shied away from the hasty emotionalism of many modern churches.

Alas, I don't consider myself a typical "Pentecostal" -- although I was saved while my family attended an Assemblies of God church. I feel "at home" in any congregation where the believers sincerely love the Lord. I don't feel ostracized by tongue-talkers or non tongue-talkers. From my experience, I feel that many local Assemblies of God congregations place a far greater amount of emphasis on the *manifestations* of the gifts of the Spirit than the typical Church of God congregation. As such, I have always felt more comfortable attending a local congregation that didn't attempt to silence the gifts, but still uses a little more vacillation in regard to use during local meetings.

Anyway, I hope this helps. My parents moved away from the congregation that they attended (and the one that I attended during the last couple of years in high school). I enjoyed my time there, even though I felt that the congregation was a little "sleepy" at the time. I can't say that I would recommend a visit to the local CoG church, but it could help you to understand the beliefs and practices of that local congregation somewhat better.

:)

Re: Church of God? (the denomination) - posted by rickwebb (), on: 2008/3/26 17:13

There are so many different streams of the Church of God. I am a part of the Church of God (Anderson Indiana) that is NOT a Pentecostal church.

Usually the Church sign will contain a description of association such as (Cleveland Tenn.) or (Anderson, Ind.) . There are many independent churches.

If it happens to be one of the Anderson Churches...I might be able to help a bit.

Rick Webb
Michigan

Re: Church of God? (the denomination) - posted by repentcanada, on: 2008/3/26 22:38

I spoke to the pastor of the church here in Edmonton, Alberta today and was very encouraged to go through the doctrinal statement with him and hear his heart for the Lord. This Church of God is the one which originated back in the 1880's out of Cleveland, Tennessee.

I really appreciate all the feedback on this thread, and hope for more.

Re: Church of God - posted by broclint (), on: 2008/3/27 0:37

repentcanada,

I am a pastor in the Church of God, headquarters, Cleveland, Tennessee. The assessment by Brother Chris is very fair. The Church of God started out being a holiness church very much in line with the old time Wesleyan Methodists, and in fact was started by praying for revival within a local Baptist church by a small group of about 7 men. You can read the history by Dr. Charles Conn, "Like a Mighty Army". Later some Methodists that were hungry for revival joined these men in prayer. God began to stir folks for revival and some of the local churches were very resistant. The group formed a "holiness union" that later became the Church of God. They tried to do everything in keeping with the Bible including the name of the church. Revival finally came and with it an outpouring of the Holy Spirit in which there were some who spoke in tongues. You have to remember that this was long before what is called the "charismatic" movement. They did not know exactly what was happening to them, only that they had been hungry and thirsty for God, and God's Spirit manifested Himself through them, and they found their experience confirmed in the book of Acts. There followed a season of great revival in which many souls were saved and many churches were formed, missionaries were sent out, and then there was a crisis in leadership that caused them to have to take a long and hard look at organizing the church as much as possible according to the book of Acts.

In the early days of the Church of God, I do not believe you could find another church that tried to adhere to scripture any more closely. The General Assemblies every two years held at the first in Cleveland, Tennessee and then at various places across the country were times of great spiritual awakenings where every member of the church was encouraged to attend if at all possible and certainly all the pastors and preachers. Each state also had "campmeetings" like the old time Methodist campmeetings, where revival and evangelism was preached. But like most denominations, with growth and organization, a lot of the fire and evangelism was lost.

Now, sad to say, many of the churches have strayed a long way from their roots and the teachings and the "practical commitments" have changed a lot over the course of the last couple of decades. It was not legalism and a legal system of do's and don'ts but an agreed upon commitments made by the General Assembly that held the church together in very close fellowship for many years, but when the commitments were broken the General Assemblies reflected that. Now instead of the very close fellowship (in fact we used to have not only the General Assemblies, and State Campmeetings, but also District fellowship meetings at least once every three months) every church sort of held to the General Assembly minutes to a degree but became somewhat of an autonomous organization of its own. All properties belong to the General Assembly, but in practice and local teaching now you may have a very conservative church on one side of town and a very "charismatic" church on the other side. One side of town may believe in old time praying and seeking God and straight preaching, singing hymns and spiritual songs with a choir or with the congregation, while on the other side of town they may be having a "dance team", multiple choruses, and preaching that resembles one of the TV evangelists. No more district meetings that had everyone on the same page, and state meetings are poorly attended (at least in this area) except for the ministers and their wives... and the General Assemblies are far more sound and fury than substance.

But there are still those who hunger and thirst for real revival and for authentic outpourings of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of the fruits of the Spirit and a changed life that reflects the character of Christ first and foremost above any gift. One of the first principles of the Church of God was "we believe in the whole Bible rightly divided, the New Testament as our only rule for government and discipline". Thank God there are still some that believe in the whole Bible and will not shun any part of it nor use any part of it for a hobby horse.

It has been a godly heritage for me. I was one of the fortunate ones who had a pastor who had been around in the early days of the outpouring of the Spirit of God and revival and for the 40+ years that he pastored our church never lost that zeal for missions, for evangelism, and for holy living. He lived an exemplary life with his wife of 55 years and passed away three months ago. May God give me the grace to build well on that heritage.

I am not an apologist for the denomination. Like a lot of organizations it all depends upon the local church. I hate that it has become that way because the fellowship among the local churches used to be so precious and the youth camps and campmeetings were a sheer joy... but when the world comes into the church and the church becomes like the world... there is no more fellowship, just society. Art Katz has a lot to say that describes so accurately what has happened to what they call the "classical pentecostals" and the "charismatic movement". So very much that is either dead orthodoxy or hyped (to repeat myself) sound and fury signifying nothing.

God bless you in your quest for what is real.

Clint

Re:, on: 2008/3/27 8:08

Thank you, Clint, for sharing that. That was very informative. I hope my rabbit trail into the snake handling thing didnt off end you... Here in the mountains there are still a few churches like that, and several are called "Church of God", and I was trying to make the seperation between them and the denominational Church of God.

Anyway... very good definition. Thank you.

Krispy

Re: - posted by broclint (), on: 2008/3/27 9:05

Bro. Krispy,

No offence taken at all! Every church, it seems in so many denominations or home churches or whatever these days seem to have come to the state of the days of the book of Judges unfortunately "doing that which is right in their own eyes" , and is only as good as its pastor/leader... hence the need of a great revival that puts us all on the same track regardless of backgrounds and minor doctrinal differences.

That is the refreshing thing about this site... there seems to be a hunger for just that kind of move by God. And when it comes, as I hope and pray that it will, I believe we will see many more of Mr. Ravenhill's ilk who will not be concerned about denominations but rather whether or not they really know God.

Clint

edited to add this PS to Krispy: BTW I am sure you are aware that the Church of God had its beginnings in your state... some places like "Coker Creek" and "Camp Creek". And I appreciate you differentiating between the denomination and the "snake handlers". Glad I missed all that :-D .

Re: - posted by PreachParsly (), on: 2008/3/27 10:00

Quote:

KrispyKrittr wrote:

Thank you, Clint, for sharing that. That was very informative. I hope my rabbit trail into the snake handling thing didnt offend you... Here in the mountains there are still a few churches like that, and several are called "Church of God", and I was trying to make the seperation between them and the denominational Church of God.

Anyway... very good definition. Thank you.

Krispy

I think that a lot of the snake handlers are Oneness or "Jesus only" and the church of God we are talking about are trinitarian.

Re: Church of God? (the denomination) - posted by MSeaman (), on: 2008/3/27 11:50

Ricky,

I have been going to Church of God (Cleveland TN) for almost a year now. I did go to Assembly of God (Springfield MO) , but changed. I changed mostly because I wanted to hear the Word being preached. I also like the encouragement for Holiness. Our church isn't the least bit legalistic. Our Pastor is very balanced in the preaching of the Word. His emphasis is always on your relationship with Jesus and the Joy it brings even in trials. As for the gifts of the Spirit. This is the quietest Pentecostal church I have been in...There is no overemphasis on Tongues or that kind of thing.

It is my opinion (and as such, not worth much) that each church is going to be individualistic to some extent based upon

its leadership and members. I am glad that you had a chance to talk to the Pastor for yourself.

Re: - posted by wallbuilder, on: 2008/3/27 17:44

From what I remember from my A/G Bible college days, both the Assemblies of God and Church of God have their roots from the Azusa outpouring in 1906, which came because of a black man named William Seymour.

Church of God, began first, and is primarily an African American denomination. The Assemblies of God, unfortunately, started its own church after Azusa, apart from church of God and is primarily caucasian. Someone correct me if I'm wrong.

Re: Church of God? (the denomination), on: 2008/3/27 18:26

Hey Ricky,

I attended a Church of God, Cleveland TN, for about 2 years. It is where I came to the Lord and was raised by wolves.

Much of what they preached was good. They still preached some degree of holiness and repentance from sin, which I haven't found in AG churches I went to. And their doctrine on paper looks good at first glance.

Many of them are charismatic, complete with over-emphasizing tongues, "dancing in the Spirit" and knocking people over by laying on hands or blowing upon (slain in the Spirit). They would constantly pass around demons through the laying on of hands (and I know they're demons because of the fruit).

It doesn't matter how they were founded, how powerful the revival was, because like all revivals, it has apostasized. They might have more truth than most denominations, but they also have just as much leaven.

A large majority of the denomination embraces TBN, word of faith, health and wealth, prosperity gospel, and name it claim it. And if you want to be a member, chances are, you're going to have to swear before the congregation that you will faithfully tithe 10% of your income to the church.

In my experience, the ones preaching holiness on Sunday were viewing pornography on Monday, and the ones playing in the worship team or singing in the choir were the next nights watching wicked abominations on TV that God hates, while the pastor didn't dare preach against it because his building was in debt and to preach against people's sins so directly would mean he would lose tithe money and ultimately, his steeple house. So holiness would be preached in a generalized manner, rather than straight-forward and applicable, a truly subtle trick of the enemy of men's souls.

I realize that not all of the local fellowships are like this, as others have already said, it varies from church to church, depending on leadership and individual congregations. There are probably still a few genuine brethren here and there. But for the most part, it's the same as any other denomination.

I don't know if you're aware of the ins-and-outs of denominationalism, but I know the Lord won't let me be any part of it with a clear conscience. I've seen too much going on behind the scenes and I'm convinced that if Isaiah or Jeremiah or Peter or Paul were to come back to our modern day, they would rail hard against denominationalism and weep profusely over it because of the leavens and evils that come along with that system and the traditions of men. Is Christ divided?

If you want to be a minister with them, you will have to go through the MIP Program and you will either have to regularly pay tithes with documented proof, or they will revoke your preaching license. And if you ever preach against anything wrong with their denomination they'll revoke your license. And you will have to sign a piece of paper stating that you believe in the Pre-trib rapture. And then a group of "elders" whom you never met will lay hands on you and speak in tongues over you as they ordain you. And chances are, they will appoint you under the care of a "bishop" and if he tells you to do something, and it's not scriptural and you can't do it with a clear conscience, he has a right to revoke your license for not submitting. I could go on and on. But inevitably, you can't get too involved in a denomination without compromising at some point or another, and as for me, dear brother, I'm scared to death to compromise, because that's where deception starts.

My advice to you would be if the Lord is leading you to attend a particular church, and you know it's the Lord, then go for

it and stay sensitive to His voice. But if the Lord isn't leading you, then my brother... RUN FROM DENOMINATIONALISM!!!

Re:, on: 2008/3/28 8:51

Quote:
-----I think that a lot of the snake handlers are Oneness or "Jesus only" and the church of God we are talking about are trinitarian.

I think they are crazy...

Krispy

Re: errors - posted by broclint (), on: 2008/3/28 17:48

post deleted not worth it

Clint

Re: Thanks for the Balance - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2008/3/28 18:53

It is never wise to generalize in such a way as to cast aspersions upon entire denominations that may, in fact, still have genuine fruit of God in their midst. I know that although the Wesley brothers were run off from the Anglican denomination, never did Wesley write in a disparaging way or cancel out the entire movement as ungodly or satanic - in fact, John Wesley didn't want to separate from the Anglicans; the Methodist church came about instead by default of Anglican resistance to Wesley.

We need to be wise and balanced in all we do or say. Human impulse is to immediately decimate and carpet-bomb the whole when only a portion of undesirableness or localized error may be present. If we went ahead and did this, we would have to destroy every single fellowship, every single house church and assembly that ever congregated under the banner of Christ, right down to the original twelve apostles who were in themselves also flawed. God's way is to always seek to salvage the redeemable, and there is no better example of this than to look inside each of our hearts. If the Church of God be so terrible, if the Assemblies of God be so horrific as a *whole* as to be utterly cast to the wayside, what then can be said of us, with all our secret heart-sins, and with all our numerous faults?

(edit) Oh brother, you've deleted your post! I'm sorry to see this. There were good things in it.

Re: - posted by mamaluk, on: 2008/3/28 22:01

Quote:
-----But inevitably, you can't get too involved in a denomination without compromising at some point or another, and as for me, dear brother, I'm scared to death to compromise, because that's where deception starts.
My advice to you would be if the Lord is leading you to attend a particular church, and you know it's the Lord, then go for it and stay sensitive to His voice. But if the Lord isn't leading you, then my brother... RUN FROM DENOMINATIONALISM!!!

Brother Josef(?) I agree with you here as I often see sectarianism as sin. I can also agree with what brother Paul said as to exercise wisdom and balance in light of associating ourselves with various "denominations". In a sense, it's true, sinners fellowshiping with saved sinners, to some extent... we have to sort of make the best of what's available. True Christian fellowship has to first and foremost abide by biblical principles. One comes to mind is the "unequal yoke" precept.

To yoke ourselves with any of the organized religious group in Christendom, just for the sake of "fellowship", can be most problematic. While fellowship with believers/saved sinners who share their lives in Christ as the sole Leader/Pastor, and Scripture as the sole authority, (presuming with accurate interpretation and obedience), has to be a biblical and safe ground to tread on, especially in the present depraved age.

I do reckon that we all are sinners, even at the apex of our own holiness, but to knowingly compromise and violate what

s explicit in Scripture, or being forced to compliance brought on by the pressure from some self-ordained and self-serving folks/groups, or perhaps even demonically influenced folks, we would only end up with a troubling conscience and offending The Lord.

I firmly believe that when we love God enough to be willing to obey whatever it is, God will, most definitely will, guide us and bring us to where HE wants us, regardless of circumstances and situations, even though we might have to make some sacrifices, such as being an outcast, or end up being very lonely for some periods of time, but during those loneliest moments, from experience, I know that our Lord does draw us closer to Him

We should often remind ourselves with the examples set by Noah, Moses, Paul...and for sure, our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

just a few thoughts,
mamaluk

Re: - posted by dohzman (), on: 2008/3/28 23:33

I was going to post to Josef Urban about a lot of errors in his tearing down the Church of God but to be honest there's so much anger and bitterness in your words brother I really don't feel like setting myself up for the pain in the neck it'll cause. I would suggest that you carefully consider reading Revelation on the seven churches. From organized home churches to denominations they all will fall into these seven somewhere.

Re:, on: 2008/3/29 0:31

Dohzman,

I have not an ounce of bitterness in my heart against anybody. I love the people at my old church and am still moved to pray for them from time to time, especially my old pastor, who sadly got sucked into TBN's "another gospel".

Paul pronounced judgment on adulterers and covetous shepherds in the church and exposed them for what they are, praying for their repentance and pleading with them in love.

I realize there will always be errors, but this is a far cry from blatant anti-scriptural practices that the Bible itself condemns. A denomination is not a church. A local fellowship of born again believers (at least a significant portion of the believers having truly tasted the grace of God) who Christ has assembled is a local Church. And then there is the world-wide Church universal, the membership role being the Lamb's Book of Life. But there is no scriptural precedence for calling an organization run like a business "the church". A denomination is not the church. It's an organization of man, run by a book of rules (bi-laws) that's not the Bible.

As I said in my first post, I know the Lord has a remnant in nearly every evangelical denomination. But this doesn't condemn one that denomination as a whole or make it right.

Re: - posted by broclint (), on: 2008/3/29 10:08

I deleted my last post but decided to put it back in due to the remarks of Brother Paul and Brother Dohzman that support precisely my feelings on the matter... and to refute some obvious errors:

Quote:
-----Wallbuilder: From what I remember from my A/G Bible college days, both the Assemblies of God and Church of God have their roots from the Azusa outpouring in 1906, which came because of a black man named William Seymour.

Church of God, began first, and is primarily an African American denomination. The Assemblies of God, unfortunately, started its own church after Azusa, apart from church of God and is primarily caucasian. Someone correct me if I'm wrong.

You stand corrected. Actually the Church of God in Christ is the predominately black congregation and started after the Azusa Street revival. The Church of God is the oldest classical Pentecostal denomination in the world, having started in

1886 and was a part of the revival that swept the nation in which the Azusa Street revival was at the tail end of it. You can read Dr. Edwin Orr's writings or hear his messages regarding revivals on this site for confirmation.

Quote:
-----Josef_Urban: I attended a Church of God, Cleveland TN, for about 2 years. It is where I came to the Lord and was raised by wolves
.

A large majority of the denomination embraces TBN, word of faith, health and wealth, prosperity gospel, and name it claim it. And if you want to be a member, chances are, you're going to have to swear before the congregation that you will faithfully tithe 10% of your income to the church.

That is simply a generalization that cannot be supported. And how would you know from attending one church for 2 years? The Church of God as a matter of fact has had the teaching from its inception "against members swearing or taking an oath" in keeping with the scripture "let your yea, be yea". We do not swear even in court by simply affirm to tell the truth. Tithing is certainly not a requirement of becoming a member and in fact the procedure for taking in members regarding finances is simply this statement: "Are you willing to support the church with our attendance and temporal means to the best of your ability as the Lord prospers you?" That is one of nine questions to which the applicant for membership answers in the affirmative. No one is barred from attending member or not. And as far as a large majority embracing TBN... that depends upon the local church and its pastor... certainly there are plenty of us who have repudiated TBN, PTL, Jimmy Swaggart and the whole lot of charismata minus holy living since the onset of all of it.

Quote:
-----Josef: In my experience, the ones preaching holiness on Sunday were viewing pornography on Monday, and the ones playing in the worship team or singing in the choir were the next nights watching wicked abominations on TV that God hates, while the pastor didn't dare preach against it because his building was in debt and to preach against people's sins so directly would mean he would lose tithe money and ultimately, his temple house. So holiness would be preached in a generalized manner, rather than straight-forward and applicable, a truly subtle trick of the enemy of men's souls.

Again that is a very unfair generalization based upon a very limited experience... and certainly one that could as well be applied to any denomination or any "non-denomination". And do you know these allegations as fact or are you simply slandering for the sake of making a point?

In fact all your suggestions about not being in a denomination are simply ludicrous logically. There is not a church anywhere that does not have some mortal human being at the helm of it regardless of how spiritual he or she claims to be. And that being so, there is not a church regardless of whether they call themselves non-denominational, or independent, that is not subject to error. In fact when there is not a system of government and checks and balances by more than one head honcho, the propensity for corruption is far more prevalent than if you have a group of people that serve to keep one individual from dominating. And the truth is that the exact same generalizations could be made for those churches where "nobody tells me what to preach, what to teach, how to spend my money, and how to live my life except 'God'" who have no checks and balances very easily become, (and in this area are most definitely are) cults built around one man and his "convictions". I would not dare generalize and say they are all that way, just many in this area... "it is my way or the highway"... and the guy in charge is an Elmer Gantry to all the women. To generalize about all the evils of a denomination is to overlook the obvious truism that "power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely" whether it is in one man or in many men at the top.

Quote:
-----Josef: And if you ever preach against anything wrong with their denomination they'll revoke your license. And you will have to sign a piece of paper stating that you believe in the Pre-trib rapture. And then a group of "elders" whom you never met will lay hands on you and speak in tongues over you as they ordain you.

Again this is simply a false statement. The doctrinal position of the church since its inception has been: "Article 13, Declaration of Faith; We believe in the premillennial second coming of Jesus; first, to resurrect the righteous dead and to catch away the living saints to Him in the air; second, to reign on the earth a thousand years." Rapture is not mentioned in the teachings, period. I have preached post tribulation second coming of the Lord for 20 years, many messages which

were on the radio that covered not only the whole district but reached into several other church districts as well. I have never one time been confronted on the issue by another Church of God pastor, or District Overseer or State Overseer, although several evangelists tried to debate the issue with very little success. As for saying anything against the denomination, that is patently false also. Several pastors, and associate pastors and ministers, including myself have met with committees from the international headquarters and very vocally stated objections to things going on in the church. I have written several letters to headquarters regarding things that were wrong including warning about the dangers many years ago of associating with Jimmy Swaggart and how that was simply draining our local churches... and the danger of any man being put on a pedestal... I was proven right. I wrote regarding the association by some of our ministers with PTL even that far back, and later with TBN. It is ridiculous to say that there can be no criticism of issues in the church. That is precisely what the General Assemblies are all about... one week every two years with ministers and laity from all over the world making motions and giving speeches regarding anything that they think is going wrong. They have the whole time between assemblies to bring the matters to the agenda for discussion. The problem is that as in all the churches, the spirit of revival has ebbed so low and the majority rules... that there has been a whole host of things "passed" that never should have been passed.

As for a bunch of elders whom you never met praying over you in tongues... I don't have a clue where you saw this happen, but I assure you, your generalization is not true.

Quote:
-----Josef: But inevitably, you can't get too involved in a denomination without compromising at some point or another, and as for me, dear brother, I'm scared to death to compromise, because that's where deception starts.

Again I believe that is a generalization that is simply not true. There may well be a time when I am "kicked out" of the denomination, but that threat does not bother me in the least. I thank God that the pastor that served before me preached here for over 40 years. His reputation, his stand for Christ, his exemplary life and the fruit of his ministry certainly did not leave him without attack, but they were afraid to touch his ministry or this church... all they would have gained would have been an empty building. There are those like John Wesley, like Charles Spurgeon, like Charles Finney and many, many others who preached trying to bring reform in their denominations, and in the process were excluded from them. You certainly do not have to compromise period regardless of what it costs.

There is just a matter of integrity that is involved your post. I suggest you should check out all the facts rather than try to extrapolate your "experience" into making such sweeping charges. You have missed quite a few godly men and godly churches in your charge. And I say this candidly, the same thing would be true if it were any number of churches that you could name. If the doctrine is corrupt, then that doctrine certainly should be challenged, but it is impossible to make a sweeping judgment for "the Baptists", the "Church of God", the "Assembly of God", all of which are denominations, that makes compromisers and those who "preach holiness in a generalized way" out of a whole organization. The corruption is in man and it may be one man at the top of his little house church or independant church or many men at the top of a denomination, but each of us will have to give account of himself to God.

I do recognize the fact that you did say, "I realize that not all of the local fellowships are like this, as others have already said, it varies from church to church, depending on leadership and individual congregations. There are probably still a few genuine brethren here and there. But for the most part, it's the same as any other denomination." At least for that candid statement, I am grateful.

Clint

Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2008/3/29 10:45

Broclint, thank you for re-posting. I'm glad you saved the original! It contains some good things that I feel need to be said to preserve balance - and who better to voice them than a pastor of the very denomination that is in question?

I also attend a Pentecostal fellowship (Assembly of God) and was until this year a certified minister with them. I was compelled to not renew my credentials because of a conflicting doctrinal stance on the Fundamental Truth concerning initial evidence of Holy Ghost Baptism - a point which is non-negotiable for all AG ministers.

My pastor (who is not a wolf by any long shot) and I sat down one afternoon after he got a call by the district presbyter and discussed the reason I refused to renew for 2008. We had a little scripture volley from Acts 2 to 1 Cor. 14, and finally settled on agreeing to disagree with a sincere, tearful hug and our love in Christ strongly professed to each other notwithstanding this discrepancy. He still wants me to preach and minister in the church.

The thing I'm trying to say is that the "evil" of denominationalism is not as cut-and-dry as some people would make you think. I don't know of any Pentecostal denomination (AG or COG or COGiC or Four Square or Fire-Baptized Holiness or any sister fellowship) that requires its members to tithe. It's *ministers*, yes - but members, no. There are many men of God in these fellowships who haven't bowed the knee to Baal, and they preach faithfully the full counsel of God each week, and they don't get hung up on denominationalism. The people who get hung up and confounded the most by denominations are those who are not in them, those who try to serve God with a loner mindset - and although they endeavour to do great things, ultimately they have no authority because of their heart-bitterness and refusal to submit to another man's authority. I don't know about COG, but AG churches are not cookie-cutter; each fellowship is unique, and the pastors are permitted to be individuals and not denominational androids as some may think. I've preached in some AG churches where contemporary music is absolutely frowned upon, and other churches where contemporary music makes up the bulk of their praise and worship. It's really a demographic thing; a Pentecostal church in Arkansas will have quite a different flavor from one in, say, Boca Raton, Florida.

In all the churches, however, the only thing asked is that all AG ministers conform to the 16 Fundamental Truths so "error" is not propagated. I'm sure the COG has something similar. There is really nothing wrong with this, as we see even in the book of Acts the early church Apostles having to write a letter and lay down some guidelines to all the churches, informing Gentiles they didn't have to be circumcised, but only to keep from fornication and things strangled, etc. The purpose was not to create a faction or denomination, but to guard from legalism and error. It was a necessity.

Re: - posted by broclint (), on: 2008/3/29 11:14

Quote:
-----PW wrote:I don't know about COG but AG churches are not cookie-cutter; each fellowship is unique, and the pastors are permitted to be individuals and not denominational androids as some may think.

In all the churches, however, the only thing asked is that all AG ministers conform to the 16 Fundamental Truths so "error" is not propagated. I'm sure the COG has something similar. There is really nothing wrong with this, as we see even in the book of Acts the early church Apostles having to write a letter to all the churches to inform gentiles they didn't have to be circumcised, but only to keep from fornication and keep from things strangled, etc. The purpose was not to create a faction or denomination, but to guard from legalism and error. It was a necessity.

Thank you Brother Paul for this and the former posts.

I respect your holding to your convictions regarding the genuine Baptism of the Holy Spirit. The time has certainly arrived when the spurious is far more frequent than the genuine. There is all the talk about revival in this, that and the other place and miracles and so forth, but it has not changed the moral climate of the city, the state or the country one iota. That is the vast difference between what is called a "Pentecostal outpouring" and the reality of that revival at the turn of the 20th century in which both our "fellowships" were born. And the revival was not by any means contained in one group but spread all over. May God come down again!

The fact is, as we well know, that each of the revival movements in history resulted in the necessity of having to draw up some form of agreements for fellowship, "thus far we will go and no further" in recognizing one another's fruit so that those who come in privily as Peter and Jude said not bring heresies, and false teaching among the flock. Unfortunately when large numbers of people begin to sanction behavior that is unscriptural there comes a time when the whole process

s that started such groups as the Anabaptists, the Methodists, the Assembly of God, the Church of God and etc. starts all over again. That time may well come for me... but thus far it has not.

Even those independent churches if they are to grow beyond their little doorstep, such as the Charity Ministries has, and such as Brooklyn Tabernacle has, they have to set up some general guidelines for fellowship and organization. It was inevitable in the early church, hence their general assemblies as you pointed out to define polity for the whole church, and it is inevitable now.

Some of us remember the when that there was such great fellowship and genuine conviction of sin, and the great miracle of new birth in many of our churches that has lasted till this day, and are praying for salvaging those that can be salvaged rather than as Mike B. so often says "throwing out the baby with the bathwater". There are precious souls that I do not want to be left to a shepherd that may come in and be in tune with TBN and the whole mess of fruitless and world loving churchianity. The hireling abandons the flock, the good shepherd lays down his life for the flock.

Clint