

"Let the Church be the Church!"

by Wayne Goff

Growing up in the church, I often heard preachers proclaim to those who wanted to insert human innovations into the work or worship of the church, "**Let the church be the church!**" They were suggesting that the Lord's church was being turned aside from its God-given mission to one authored by men.

But what does it *mean* to let the church be the church? What exactly is the church *supposed to be*?

We need look no further than the first church on earth, the one established on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2) around 33 A.D. We know that the church began by the preaching of the Gospel (Acts 2:14-36). We know that "those who gladly received his word were baptized" (v. 41). We know that these saved souls comprised the first church and that "they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers" (v. 42). Now let's add up what we have learned already.

1. The church began by Gospel preaching

2. The church continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and in worship

I would surmise that when we let the church be the church, then we are letting the church preach and teach the pure, unadulterated gospel to the lost and then to the saved to help them grow and maintain their salvation! What would you conclude?

Christ Gave Gifts To The Church

Just to be sure, let's check and see what "gifts" Christ gave to the church when He ascended to heaven. Ephesians 4:8 says "Therefore He says: 'When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.' " Then in Ephesians 4:12, Paul identifies those gifts as apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. What do those "gifts" sound like they were given to do? TEACH! The apostles and prophets are the revealers of the New Testament's twenty-seven books (Eph. 3:3-5). Evangelists proclaim the Gospel (Rom. 10:14-15) for the purpose of getting men to obey God (Rom. 10:16). Pastors (also called elders, bishops, shepherds) are to oversee, shepherd, and teach the church to remain faithful to the revealed Word (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2-3). Teachers continue to teach the Word of God and to perfect the faith and lives of believers (1 Cor. 12:28-29; Titus 2:3; Heb. 5:12; James 3:1). Preachers are some of the teachers (1 Tim. 2:7; 2 Tim. 1:11), but not all teachers are preachers.

Again, add up what you have learned. The "gifts" of Christ to the church are all involved in the teaching and promoting of the Gospel! Christ gave these gifts to the church so that it could do what the church is supposed to do! Paul called the church "the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15). ***That's because the church upholds and teaches the truth!***

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