

## IS THERE A ROLE FOR INDEPENDENT CHRISTIANITY?

By Nino Boezio

Many today are turned off “organized” religion and want to find their own way with God.

The atmosphere in many Christian churches today may be stifling, the goals are nebulous, the preaching is uninspiring, and the organizations are highly political. Rather than being lifted up, a person may be brought down spiritually and made to confront rather mundane matters of a non-spiritual nature.

Therefore some seek to achieve higher standards by focusing on the inner self and freely listening to anyone who may provide some inspiration. These persons become non-denominational and even look to consider secular discussions that may elevate the human mind.

Some turn to TV evangelists, for even if the doctrines taught are suspect, at least the preaching is vibrant. But yes, there are still pleas for money. Even though many people aren't stingy but rather generous in supporting what God may be doing, there may still be nagging doubts as to whether the money is well-spent.

The disappointment with organized and structured religion is understood.

Many churches have failed to latch on to a common sense of purpose that energizes its congregations. Churches may only experience greater attendance in times of national or global crisis, since people are looking for answers and comfort during periods of stress. But once the crisis is gone, people do not come back.

I recall a minister once said, that if a person leaving a church service is not better off than when he or she came, then the church has failed in doing its job.

Yet the church Jesus established in the first century had a sense of mission and incorporated a strong vision. All of the preaching elevated church members to do more with their lives and gave them a strong focus. The messages conveyed an eternal mindset which spanned across all time, whether it was in reference to the past, the present or the future.

The church also played a tremendous role in nurturing and encouraging all those who became Christians and that fellowshiped with one another. There was a bond of unity that was established through a commonality of belief and understanding.

The true gospel message was lost many centuries ago which underlies the crux of the problem. The notable Christian churches of today have become

rather aimless as a result. They may preach about the person of Christ and recite His sayings, but do not frame His message in a useful comprehensive manner that credibly and smartly touches upon all areas of life.

Independent Christians are a by-product of an ineffective church culture. People do vote with their feet, and in this case they choose to walk away.

However, Jesus Christ and the apostles never intended for Christians to be divided and separate. Therefore it is imperative for every Christian to latch on to the vision and be part of the mission of the church that Jesus founded, wherever it truly operates. A true Christian needs to be lifted up. Jesus' church as a body works best when people are together, not separate or fragmented. When people do not work toward a common purpose, they will tend to focus inwardly and possibly become selfish.

Independent Christianity is not the ideal solution and is not what Jesus Christ wanted to see. But it is understood. It has developed in response to disappointment over what the Christian churches of today have to offer.

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