

Why There Are Unsaved People In Church

It has often been noticed by some people that there may be unsaved people who attend church. There also may be people in churches who attend, and yet have very little fruit of God in their lives, and may in fact behave in some very un-Christian manners (perhaps swearing, or living sinful lifestyles).

How does this happen?

Certainly the Gospel is preached from the pulpit, and the pastor teaches the Bible. The message is there, yet why is it that some people are not living it out, and perhaps not even saved, not truly believing in Jesus and repentant of their sin?

Maybe it's because we are not operating the church by correct, Biblical, new covenant principles.

In the new covenant church, believers met in small groups, groups of equals, in which everyone could minister--everyone could speak, prophecy, pray, teach.

One of the most important functions of the meeting was to invite the unsaved and unlearned into the meetings. And what is more, the Bible gives an amazing promise in this regard. The Bible tells us that there is a way for every unsaved and unlearned person in a Christian meeting to believe and confess that God is real and be changed.

How?

Everyone must minister, specifically, everyone must prophecy (which is to speak the word of God with understanding)

24 But if all prophecy, and there come in one that believeth not, or *one* unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all:

25 And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on *his* face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.
(1Corinthians 14:24-25)

“If all prophecy”--if everyone speaks what God wants spoken--EVERYONE--not just one person, from a distant, authoritarian pulpit--EVERYONE--speaks--EVERYONE--talks about God, relates their experiences, witnesses the Gospel, in fact talks specifically to the unsaved person--talks to them (not preach with authority)--helps them understand their sin, and helps them understand that Jesus loves them and can deliver them from their problems and forgive their sin.....

Then.....”the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on *his* face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.”

Think about it.

In the ritual of “Sunday church” we have a preordained plan which does not speak directly to the individual’s needs (nor does it speak to the individual's sin). The “secrets of the heart” remain hidden. A person can show up to church every week, and be a silent “sheep” like everyone else--and never be ministered to directly by anyone. And so remain in their sin, or in their need.

It’s an impersonal system (and yet we preach a personal God!). It allows anyone to enter in (which is a good thing), yet at the same time tradition has made us lose the operational plan which ought to be in place to meet the needs of those who do enter in! That operational plan is the apostleship in which the new covenant church operated. And they were in fact simply following the example of Jesus, who, did not minister from a distant pulpit, but rather went directly to the poor, the sick, the needy and served. Jesus said He worked equally with His apostles (Luke 22:25-29) and He prayed they would do all He did and greater. But ancient tradition which comes from the Dark Ages has made us lose the small group action which Jesus and the Church in the Bible worked through. Apostleship was officially done away with by a Roman emperor in the 4th century--was this a correct decision?

If we operated by the new covenant system, in which everyone could prophecy, what the Bible says would happen is that when an unsaved or unlearned person was invited in (which certainly was done often and in fact was a goal of the system!) he or she would be spoken to in a very direct manner about God.

He would be “convinced” that God is real, that God cares about him, that Jesus can heal him, deliver him from his difficulties. He would be “judged”--which is to say that his sin would be made apparent--in a direct manner. The Bible is saying that if all the group worked together, they could confront the sin that someone might be in, talk to them about it, make them know they have violated God’s laws (as we all have!) and need to repent and understand that Jesus’ offering on the cross is the only way to be saved.

The “the secrets of his heart made manifest;”the hidden sin would be exposed--the hidden need would be exposed.

It would be direct, and it would come from everyone--and the Bible says that if we did things this way, the unsaved or unlearned would truly believe that God is real, "that God is in you of a truth."

24 But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or *one* unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all:

25 And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on *his* face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.

26 ¶ How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying. (1Corinthians 14:24-26)

The new covenant clearly states that in the Christian meeting everyone should have the opportunity to speak. This is how God is meant to operate in the new covenant, through a group--a small group. This is how Jesus operated. And one of the reasons why we should work this way is so that the unsaved and unlearned will believe--which is what our central goal should be.

The fact is that the vast majority of western Christian churches were established in Christian nations. And, since so many follow didactically after "founding fathers", the goal of the Gospel has been effectively removed from the operation of the church. In this area, in fact, tradition makes the goals of the church and the definition of success, move in exactly the opposite direction the Bible gives.

Again, think about it. A "successful" church has one person who prophecies and a large group which is silent. The goal tradition gives is to create an environment in which people are not ministers. A "successful" church has hundreds or even thousands of people who do not prophecy within the framework of the meeting.

The Bible tells us here that "If" all prophecy--which is saying that we can choose to not follow this concept. We can set up a function in which only one person has authority to prophecy. The Bible is saying that this is a mistake that we can possibly make. And the end result is that people who enter in will remain in their sin, not be helped, not be judged, not get saved.

Yet "if" we would follow these simple guidelines, God has given an amazing

promise--that in fact anyone who enters in will be saved and helped.

He is waiting for people who will take Him up on His promise.