

I Fear For the Church Today

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To know what is going on in the church today will bring about a great concern for it. Many congregations have poor and often unqualified leadership. Some of our preachers fill a position, but neither *preach* much nor *do* much. Goals of growth and evangelism are seldom being set, so the members are bored because they are not kept busy. Our young people are entertained but not involved in the work, nor schooled in the definitiveness of the Gospel and the church. Statistics say that 70% are eventually lost.

In many instances, our worship services are pathetic. Christians who are commanded to sing, in worship to God, sit in the pew without opening their mouths. Others are hesitant to sing out, lest they seem to be singing a solo. Too many partake of the Lord's Supper like robots. Our giving is not what it should be because our programs of work are not what they should be. We want our sermons to be professional and short, so that we can be dismissed within the hour.

Too often our young men are ignored, being given no opportunity to participate in the work or worship leadership. Our women are not challenged and used in the work of the church. Plans or goals for congregational growth are weak or non-existent. Many times, we resemble a club or a social work group more than the Lord's church. Being paralyzed by apathy, it is amazing that we are able to hold together under such circumstances. Too many who call themselves Christians don't really have time for the Lord, but somehow "the club" continues to go on with these minor activities, these "forms" of Christianity.

Whatever mission work we do is only a token effort that can be used as an excuse for not doing more. We have ignored the real work of the church so long that we think we are doing His work by just assembling for worship. That is counted as being "faithful." Most congregations have stopped having Gospel meetings, or else they are kept so short they are more of a type of entertainment than anything else, allowing us the diversion of occasionally hearing another preacher. We have so few outsiders – and even the local membership – to attend our meetings that we have almost dispensed with giving the Lord's invitation. And so few obey the Gospel in a year's time that we have almost forgotten what it is like to see one being baptized into Christ. Some members don't like to have missionaries visit because they don't want to be bothered with the sad stories of the needs of others.

Brethren, how long will we go on like this? Who will say they have had enough? Who will wake up and get up, and go to work for the Lord? I don't know what it is going to take to move us and to get us back to putting first things first, but I do know that unless we soon find ourselves and come back to the Lord, we will be lost, and worlds of other people are going to be lost too. Will it be necessary for us, as it was for Israel of old, to suffer painful correction if we are to be awakened from our spiritual stupor? Would the Lord warn us, as He did the churches in Revelation 2 and 3, that if we do not correct ourselves, He will remove our candlesticks from the fellowship of the faithful?

(To be continued next week)