



# Seek The Old Paths

*“Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths. . . and walk therein”*  
(Jeremiah 6:16)

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## IS THE LORD'S CHURCH DYING? #1

*Rod Rutherford*

It is generally acknowledged that the churches of Christ comprised the fastest growing religious body in the United States from 1946 to 1965. In the late 1960s growth gradually began to slow down. This decline has continued to the present day. As a result, prophets of doom have been predicting that sometime in the not too distant future, churches of Christ may cease to exist. A leading newspaper among us featured a series of articles not long ago about once flourishing churches which were no longer meeting. Self-styled “progressives” among us say that we must make some major changes or we will die. Is the Lord's church really in danger of dying? The answer, I believe, is a resounding “NO!”

The church Jesus built and bought with His precious blood will stand as long as this world will stand. Jesus said: *“The seed is the Word of God”* (Luke 8:11). As long as one has the seed, he can plant it and it will produce after its kind (Gen. 1:11-12). Regarding the Word of God, our Lord stated: *“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will by no means pass away”* (Matt. 24:35). The apostle Peter, quoting the inspired words of the prophet Isaiah, wrote: *“...the word of the Lord endures forever”* (1 Peter 1:25). As long as we have the Word of God, we will have the church of Christ!

The Jewish leaders who rejected the Christ and crucified Him, did their utmost to destroy the church, but failed as the book of Acts abundantly testifies. The mighty Roman Empire tried to destroy the church for two

hundred and fifty years and utterly failed. In the second century, Tertullian told the Roman oppressors: “We multiply whenever we are mown down by you; the blood of Christians is seed.” Hans Grimm, a brother in Christ who welcomed American missionaries to Germany following World War II, wrote a history of the churches of Christ which had existed for centuries in Central Europe. Keith Sisman, a preacher of the Gospel in Cambridge, England, in his book, *Traces of the Kingdom*, documented the existence of churches of Christ that flourished in the Middle Ages in the British Isles for centuries in spite of persecution by the Roman Catholics and later the Anglicans. The Lord's church will be in existence when the Lord comes again for those who *“are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air”* (1 Thess. 4:17).

The prophets of doom who speak of the disappearance of the Lord's church have a narrow vision of the church because they tend to think of it only in terms of the United States. They simply lack world vision (Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 1:8). The simple fact of the matter is that the Lord's church is growing by leaps and bounds worldwide! This writer lived and preached in Zambia for seven years and has made many shorter missionary journeys into several other African nations. The growth of the Lord's church in Africa is simply amazing! Nigeria has been an especially fruitful nation and today has as many congregations as we have in

the United States. In 2002, a professor who researched the growth of the church in Nigeria, revealed there were more than a million members of the church in Sub Sahara Africa. The number would be much larger today.

India is now the most heavily populated nation in the world. It also has more members of churches of Christ than any other nation on earth! A former professor of missions at a Christian university stated that India has some two million members of churches of Christ. Some who have worked extensively in India for many years have told me they estimate the church in India is twice the size of the church in the USA. One brother who has been part of a mission team in India for the past 34 years maintains a database with records and addresses of some 20,000 congregations in that land. He says many others exist which are not included. He estimates that India has more churches of Christ than the combined number of congregations in North, Central and South America. Robert Hall, a member of one of the forty-four mission teams which work regularly in India, reported that: “In 2023 our Indian brethren in the first ten months of 2023 baptized an average of more than 875 per day, and the retention rate is more than 75% of those who are baptized.”

When we speak of the growth of the Lord's church, we must look at the big picture in order to get the full understanding. The churches of Christ

*(Continued on page 79)*

**Is The Lord's Church Dying?...**



Editorial...

## GOD RULES

Garland M. Robinson

**Abortion is NOT a political issue. It's a MORAL issue! Multiplied millions of unborn children have been sacrificed on the altar of Satan. How many love to have it so?**

**G**od Rules in the Kingdoms of Men. As he did in the ancient past, he does so even today. Of all the creatures God made upon the earth, humankind was made in God's image. Man was exalted to have dominion "over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth" (Gen. 1:26). God's overall plan "from before the beginning of the world" (1 Peter 1:18-20) was to save sinful man through the sacrifice of the Christ, His only begotten Son (John 3:17). God used man to bring about his plan. He used both righteous men and wicked men. And, when "the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law" (Gal. 4:4).

God's redemptive plan is seen through numerous human events in history. One of the most significant occasions is found in the book of Daniel. Daniel reveals that God gave Nebuchadnezzar "a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honour. And for the majesty that he gave him, all people, nations, and languages, trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew; and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he set up; and whom he would he put down. But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him: And he was driven from the sons of men; and his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild asses: they fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven; till he knew that the most high God ruled in the kingdom of men, and that he appointeth over it

whomsoever he will" (Dan. 5:18-21). As wicked as Nebuchadnezzar was, God used him to accomplish his will.

The apostle Paul was inspired of God to write these words: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Gal. 6:7-8). When men do right, they are blessed. When men do evil, they are cursed. When men sow to the flesh (worldly things), they will reap destruction and perish in everlasting fire. Hosea worded it this way: "For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind..." (Hosea 8:7).

Many blessings have been reaped by this country from its beginning. But, how long will it continue? How long will God hold back his wrath from this exceedingly wicked generation? **Everything that is just and right is put down, silenced, suppressed, rebuked, as "misinformation;" while everything that is evil is upheld, promoted, advanced, glorified.** This philosophy and behavior is not new. Even the Israelites did evil in Isaiah's day. Heaven's declaration to them was: "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight! Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink: Which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him! Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame

consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: because **they have cast away the law of the LORD of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.** Therefore is the anger of the LORD kindled against his people, and he hath stretched forth his hand against them, and hath smitten them: and the hills did tremble, and their carcasses were torn in the midst of the streets. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still" (Isaiah 5:20-25).

The merciless slaughter of the unborn is promoted and upheld by its supporters marching in the streets, demanding that a woman has a right to do as she pleases with her body. It is spoken of as "reproductive rights." They conveniently ignore the fact that the child they so willingly and eagerly seek to kill is not her body! There is no explanation as to why it's called "murder" to kill a 5-month old child "outside the womb," and it's not "murder" to kill a 5-month old child "inside the womb?" Since 1973 there have been approximately 63 million abortions in the US — over a million abortions last year!

Many claim the unborn are not "persons." However, Jeremiah was a person before he was born. God said of him, "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations" (Jer. 1:5). John the baptizer was a person, a human being, before he was born. "And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, **the babe leaped in her womb;** ... For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, **the babe leaped in my womb for joy**" (Luke 1:39-44). It is also worthy to see from this passage that Mary is spoken of as the mother of Jesus while he was still in her womb (v.43)! What if Jesus had been aborted?

Many try to convince the masses that abortion is a "political issue" and that religious people ought to remain silent on political issues. I would agree regarding political issues — that is, positions that are neither right or wrong in and of themselves. However, abortion is NOT a political issue. It's a MORAL issue! Many try their best to force it to be political because they don't want to think of it being condemned by God. How insane is it that





## COMPARE THE CANDIDATES FOR PRESIDENT



### Donald Trump

### Kamala Harris

#### Taxpayer Funding of Abortion

**Donald Trump opposes using tax dollars to pay for abortions.** He pledged to sign the *No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act* which would limit federal funding for abortion on a government-wide basis. President Trump’s Administration issued a rule to ensure Title X funding did not go to facilities that perform or refer for abortions.

**Kamala Harris supports using tax dollars to pay for abortions.** As a Senator, Harris voted against the *No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act* which would limit federal funding for abortion on a government-wide basis. The Biden-Harris Administration directed Title X funding to facilities that perform or refer for abortions.

#### Unlimited Abortion Until Birth

**Donald Trump** opposes the *Women’s Health Protection Act*, a bill that would enshrine unlimited abortion until birth in federal law and policies and eliminate existing state-level protections for unborn children and their mothers such as parental involvement measures for minors.

**Kamala Harris** voted for the *Women’s Health Protection Act*, a bill that would enshrine unlimited abortion until birth in federal law and policies and eliminate existing state-level protections for unborn children and their mothers such as parental involvement measures for minors.

#### Funding Abortion Providers Abroad

**Donald Trump** issued the “Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance” policy which limited federal funding for organizations that provide or promote elective abortions in other countries.

**Kamala Harris** supports President Biden’s reversal of the “Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance” policy which limited federal funding for organizations that provide or promote elective abortions in other countries.

#### Born-Alive Abortion Survivors

**Donald Trump** supports the *Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act*, which would ensure that infants born alive during attempted abortions are afforded the same degree of medical care as any other newborn of the same gestational age.

**Kamala Harris** voted against the *Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act*, which would ensure that infants born alive during attempted abortions are afforded the same degree of medical care as any other newborn of the same gestational age.

#### The U.S. Supreme Court

**Donald Trump** pledges to nominate qualified individuals to the Supreme Court who will interpret the U.S. Constitution as written and not legislate from the bench. He appointed Justices Neil Gorsuch, Brett Kavanaugh, and Amy Coney Barrett.

**Kamala Harris** pledges to nominate only individuals who share her view that unlimited abortion should be a constitutionally protected right. She applauded the appointment of Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson and voted against the confirmations of Justices Neil Gorsuch, Brett Kavanaugh, and Amy Coney Barrett.



killing a baby eagle is a federal crime punishable by thousands of dollars in fines, having your gun and vehicle seized, etc. but you can kill all the baby humans you want with no consequence! Human life is to be protected!

The righteous uphold God's word on morality. What does God say about it? **"Now the works of the flesh are manifest [made known], which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God"** (Gal. 5:19-21; 1 Cor. 6:9-11). Man did not write these words, God did. Those who ignore them or change them stand condemned before God and will bare the consequences of their choices at the judgment.

In the last 50 years there have been more innocent children poisoned, cut to pieces, and ripped from the safety of their mother's womb, than all the wars fought by this country in the last 250 years. The current agenda of advancing every form of immorality is replete and overflowing with everything that is evil. God is the one who decides what is decent and moral, not man. If we're going to be right in God's sight, we must adhere to his standard, not our standard. The sins of adultery, fornication, murder, stealing, homosexuality, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (LGBTQ+), etc. etc. are all condemned by God. If you have a problem with that, then you can argue with God about it when you see him in judgment! LGBTQ+ is an umbrella term, broadly referring to all sexualities, romantic orientations, and gender identities which are not heterosexual or cisgender.

The righteous, on the other hand, support decency, uprightness, honesty, integrity, life, freedom, peace and safety. These are points that are supposed to be upheld by the governments of the world (the powers that be) according to Romans 13. Why is it that so many governments refuse to do what God ordained them to do?

Do you want a president who promotes LIFE or one who promotes DEATH? Read Matt. 12:30.

## AN ATTACK BY SATAN ON GOD'S WORD

Robert Oliver

I am reminded of the story that introduces Satan to us. It was when he was in the garden with Eve and had this discussion with her. *"Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die"* (Gen. 3:1-4).

Even at the beginning, Satan challenged God's words. We see this was not just in the beginning, but Satan also tempted Jesus using God's word. *"Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in [their] hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone"* (Matt. 4:5-6). We are also warned by Paul that *"...Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light"* (2 Cor. 11:14).

With this in mind, would it be a surprise that Satan has tried to subvert God's word? Consider the following where a key word in the Bible was not translated from the Greek, but rather transliterated.

"The reason we are stuck in continued arguments about what constitutes "baptism" with the denominational world is that the translators from the original Greek texts were afraid of offending the king. By the time the Bible was translated into the English in the 14th and 16th centuries A.D., too many powerful people, such as King James, had already been sprinkled under the practice of the Church of England as learned and approved from the Roman Catholic Church.

The word in the Greek means to be submerged or immersed. If you speak that word today in a Greek country they will understand it to be dunked, submerged, dipped under completely." <https://hermeneutics.stackexchange.com/questions/35262/>. In a word studies section there is the following statement: 907 *baptizō* — properly, "submerge" (Souter); hence, *baptize*, to immerse (literally, "dip under"). 907 (*baptizō*) implies submersion ("immersion"), in contrast to 472 / *antéxomai* ("sprinkle"). <https://biblehub.com/greek/907.htm>

If the Greek word *baptizo*, transliterated "baptize," (<https://biblehub.com/greek/907.htm>) had been correctly translated "immerse or plunge" there would have been no question in the mind of people today concerning how one is to obey the command to be baptized. (See Matthew 28:18-20). How many millions of people, both living and now dead, have been deceived by this trick of the devil.

It is true that we can determine the true meaning of "baptize" by looking at a Greek-English lexicon. Most people, however, rely on a standard English dictionary to understand the meaning of words. Consider the following dictionary definition: "*Baptize*: to immerse in water or sprinkle or pour water on in the Christian rite of baptism." <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/baptize>

God's enemy is always looking to deceive and harm God. Is it any wonder that Satan would attack God's word in a way to discourage millions of people from being obedient to what God has commanded. This is why we must be armed according to scripture to face and understand his tricks and schemes. *"Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles [schemes] of the devil"* (Eph. 6:11).

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# THE RELIGION OF MAN OR THE RELIGION OF GOD?

Marvin L. Weir

*Jesus says, “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day”*

**T**he Bible makes it very clear that there are only two religions from which man can choose: the religion of man or the religion of God! The statement Jesus made in Matthew 12:30 will haunt many people on the Day of Judgment. Jesus warned, **“He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad”** To choose a man-made religion (any denomination) over the church of Christ (Christ’s blood bought body, the church of Christ) places one in direct opposition to the Lord. The reason it is the church of Christ is because the church belongs to Christ. He promised to build His church (Matt. 16:18) which is His body of which He is head (Eph. 1:22-23).

Man’s religion has always been attractive and pleasing to men, but it has never been pleasing to God. Churches founded by men lack the authority that comes from Heaven and are thus of no benefit to one seeking to be a worshipper of God. Let us apply some principles found in 1 Kings 18 that will be of benefit to us today.

**The religion of man comes in many forms and has many followers.** Elijah was one man seeking to serve God, but Baal’s false prophets numbered 450. The odds always seem to be in favor of Satan and the world. One reason this is true is because a depraved religion will always attract and pacify an immoral and depraved humanity. It was Barabbas, the notorious murderer and insurrectionist, that the morally corrupt Jews wanted released instead of the Christ (Matt. 27:21). Today, Christ is “crucified afresh” as people pledge their allegiance to man-made churches and scoff at the Lord’s church.

The false prophets of Baal were zealous to their religion as they *“cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them”* (1 Kings 18:28). Today, many are zealous to **their religion** as they devoutly defend worship that is not authorized by the Scriptures. The apostle Paul rightly describes those who refuse to

be guided by a thus saith the Lord as those who *“have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God”* (Rom. 10:2-3). Earnestness without humble submission and obedience to the Word of God is in vain.

Followers of Baal were deceived, and so are those today who follow men instead of Christ. The disciples of Baal cried out *“but there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded”* (1 Kings 18:29). The Lord will not answer those today who are worshipping in religious error. Christ said, *“Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch”* (Matt. 15:13-14).

**The religion God authorizes is unique and has few followers.** Elijah thought that he was all alone in seeking to do the will of God. It was revealed to him, however, that there were still seven thousand in Israel who had not bowed down to Baal (2 Kings 19:18; cf. Rom. 11:4). Elijah was not alone in his struggle to worship according to God’s will, and neither are we alone today in our struggle to worship *“in spirit and in truth”* (John 4:24). Compared to the followers of false teachers, however, followers of righteousness are indeed few in number. Being unpopular and in the minority must never deter those who value their souls from doing what is godly and right. Victory does not belong to the multitudes who choose to follow the creeds of men and worldly philosophy but to those who choose to follow the Lord and are guided by His Word!

**Every person while in this life must decide who he will follow.** There are two opinions to choose between: God’s or man’s. The Bible tells us these two opinions are as wide apart as daylight and darkness. The Scriptures declare, *“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your*

*ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts”* (Isa. 55:8-9). How much more clearly can God state that what man “thinks” and “feels” does not matter when it comes to acceptable worship and service? It is tragic that so many people value and trust their feelings more than they value and trust the inspired Word of God. The Scriptures do not teach one to cling to his feelings and never part from them, but God’s Word does instruct one to *“buy the truth, and sell it not”* (Prov. 23:23). The Word of God and His Son is THE Truth (John 17:17).

The question of 1 Kings 18:21 is appropriate to ask of people today: *“How long halt [limp] ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word”* The principle today is this: “If Christ be the founder of **the** church, follow Him; but if men are the legitimate and scriptural founders of **the** church, then follow them.”

God’s Word emphatically teaches that salvation is **IN** Christ Jesus (2 Tim. 2:10) — not some man! All will be judged by the Word of Christ and not by the word of men. Most people today have seemingly decided that John 12:48 reads like this: “It does not matter if one rejects Christ and receives not his sayings, he will be judged by the creeds, opinions, and feelings of men.” What a contrast with what the Bible teaches! Jesus says, *“He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day.”*

The question pertaining to saving one’s soul is this: “Will you choose the religion of man or the religion of God?” The eternal destiny of your soul depends on the choice you make!

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# GROWING FAITH

Charles W. Leonard (1931-2017)

*Growing faith takes effort on the part of Christians.*

*Only those with a growing faith, which works by love, are pleasing to God.*

To grow means to add to, proceed further, enlarge, advance, increase or make progress. God intended for plant life, animal life and human beings to grow. Spiritual growth should be as normal as physical growth. Growth reported in the book of Acts has to do with increase of the word or with the numerical growth of the church, while the epistles refer to the spiritual growth of Christians. There is a vast difference between “having faith” and “growing faith.” Many have faith that is not a growing faith. Christ should be our example to grow *mentally, physically, spiritually* and *socially* (Luke 2:52).

## THE NEED FOR A GROWING FAITH

Every Christian needs to have a growing faith. It is impossible to please God without faith, but the kind of faith that pleases God is a growing faith that works by love (Heb. 11:6; Gal. 5:6). Faith “alone” is not sufficient, because faith must be perfected (made complete) by works (James 2:17, 18, 24, 26). An Old Testament character by the name of Abraham proved and perfected his faith by his works (James 2:21-22). The need for a growing faith should be evident from the instructions given by the apostle Peter (1 Peter 2:2; 2 Peter 3:18).

Before a Christian can leave the milk or baby stage, he must have a growing faith (1 Cor. 3:2; Heb. 5:12-13). Immaturity always develops in the absence of a growing faith. Those who are immature are not only in the baby stage, but also unable to distinguish between right and wrong (Heb. 5:14). Preachers have often been criticized by those who are immature that do not recognize Truth when it is taught.

Great heroes of faith, mentioned in Hebrews 11, were great because of the “kind” of faith they had. One of the greatest needs in the church today is that of a growing faith.

## THE WAY TO A GROWING FAITH

Faith is not a blind leap in the

dark as some believe, but is based upon evidences of the unseen (Heb. 11:1; 2 Cor. 4:18). The vehicle through which faith comes and grows is the word of God (Rom. 10:17; Isa. 55:11; Acts 15:7). The miracles recorded in the four accounts of the Gospel were designed to cause people to believe that Jesus was the Son of God (John 20:30-31).

After one believes, further teaching is necessary for one to have a growing faith. Part of the great commission was to teach those who were baptized to observe all things that Jesus commanded (Matt. 28:19-20). Those in Berea were developing a growing faith when they readily received the word and then searched the scriptures daily to see if what they heard was the truth (Acts 17:11). There seems to be the tendency today to either receive or reject what is taught without any searching. Study must take place before one can have God’s approval or be able to rightly divide the word (2 Tim. 2:15).

Only those who have an honest and sincere desire to really know the mind of God will have a growing faith. God’s thoughts and ways are different and above ours (Isa. 55:8-9). Since we are unable to know the mind of God, we must turn to the word and let him reveal his thoughts and will to us (1 Cor. 2:16). In his word, God reveals all things that pertain to life and godliness so we can have a growing faith and live by it (2 Peter 1:3).

## EVIDENCES OF A GROWING FAITH

One of the evidences of a growing faith is **when one is willing to accept all that God has spoken through Christ** (Heb. 1:1-2). All that God has “bound” in Heaven should be bound on earth and all that God has “loosed” in Heaven should be loosed on earth (Matt. 16:19). No one has the right to “bind” or “loose” where God has not done so. We live under a system of faith that is based upon the word of God (2 Cor. 5:7; Rom. 10:17). Those who refuse to hear Christ and

submit to him will be destroyed (Matt. 17:5; Acts 3:22-23).

A growing faith will **make a difference in the way Christians live**. Those who are baptized are raised to walk a “newness of life” (Rom. 6:4). All who obey the Gospel are “in Christ” and have become “new creatures” — all things have become new (2 Cor. 5:17). *Souls are purified when they obey the truth* (1 Peter 1:22). Christians can be victorious over the world through a growing faith (1 John 5:4). Followers of Christ are not to be conformed to the world, but live differently from the world (Rom. 12:2). Being different means being pure in heart, thought and life (Matt. 5:8; Phil. 4:8; 1 Tim. 5:22). The Christian graces are to be added to our growing faith (2 Peter 1:5-7). A growing faith will also produce the fruit of the Spirit, which should be in the life of all Christians (Gal. 5:22-23). The end result will be the development of real Christian character.

Evidence of a growing faith will be **seen when Christians develop the proper priorities in life**. Our world today has lost sight of what is really important in life. The soul of man is far more important than the material things of life (Matt. 16:26). Those who are serious about going to Heaven will make God and his kingdom their number one priority in life (Matt. 22:37; 6:33). The number two priority should be that of rendering service to our fellowman (Matt. 22:39; Gal. 5:13). At best, it is difficult to keep our priorities straight in a world that offers so many allurements and makes so many demands on our time.

Those who have a growing faith, will **look for opportunities to render service to their fellowman**. Christians are to look out for the good of others instead of just being concerned about their own welfare (Phil. 2:4). Christ demonstrated what a growing faith should be by ministering to the needs of others (Matt. 20:28). Many today are looking for someone to serve



them rather than looking for someone they can serve. The Lord taught that it is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35).

The attitude of those with a growing faith is **different toward worship**. People with a growing faith anxiously look forward to worship rather than feeling that worship is a duty that has to be performed (cf. Psalm 122:1). They also recognize that worship must be in “spirit” and according to “truth” (John 4:24). All with a growing faith will recognize there

needs to be authority for all that is done religiously (Col. 3:17).

Hope for those with a growing faith is not limited to this life, but extends beyond the grave. When hope is limited to this life, it leaves people miserable (1 Cor. 15:19). The eternal reward of those with a growing faith is described as a “house not made with hands” and the “city of God” (2 Cor. 4:1; Heb. 13:14; Heb. 12:22). The growing faith is what moves people to lay up treasures in Heaven rather

*(Continued on back page)*

# TRANSGENDERISM

*John Chowning*

“Inside the Transgender Empire” by Christopher F. Rufo in the September 2023 issue of *Imprimis* is a must reading for anyone who seeks to become informed (and horrified) about one of the vilest aspects of the **LGBTQ+** movement in our beloved country.

Like *Critical Race Theory*, transgenderism arose in America in academia. A group of academics, including Judith Butler, Gayle Rubin, Sandy Stone, and Susan Stryker, established the disciplines of “queer theory” and transgender studies in the late 1980s. With the same political objectives as the Marxist heroes of the Russian Revolution in the 1910s, the transgender movements goals in America are threefold:

- 1) Abolish the distinctions of “male” and “female” (which God hard-wired into humanity when he created man in Genesis 1-2).
- 2) Transcend the physical limitations and “gender roles” established by God and embedded in nature from the beginning.
- 3) So that you can connect the personal struggle of “trans” individuals to their political goal of transforming America’s personal freedoms into abject, Marxist tyranny.

Abundantly supported over the past decade by money from billionaire James Pritzker (an heir of the Hyatt Hotel fortune and a cousin of the current Illinois governor, Democrat J. B. Pritzker), the Lurie Children’s Hospital in Chicago, the Ruth Ellis Center in Detroit, Vanderbilt University in Nashville, and the Oregon Health and Science University in Portland, have been leading proponents of the promotion of the vile practices associated with transgenderism and its evil indoctrination and mutilation of young people.

In the Party Platform released to the public on August 18, 2024, one of America’s major political parties wrote ten paragraphs (on pages 56 and 57) touting its tireless promotion of **LGBTQ+** and pledging its commitment to “defending LGBTQ+ rights” (see *The Democratic Party Platform, 2024*, Ballotpedia).

Regardless of person, proponent, or political party, Jehovah still declares, **“Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter”** (Isaiah 5:20). *“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting”* (Gal. 6:7-8).

Those who practice this wickedness and those who promote it and uphold it in any way will receive God’s judgment (Rom. 1:32).

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## Is The Lord’s Church Dying?...

*(Continued from page 73)*

are made up of the worldwide body of Christians. I have been an avid reader of missionary reports, articles and books for more than sixty-five years. Based on this, I believe a conservative estimate of the number of members of the Lord’s church today would be well in excess of five million souls although only the Lord really knows how many are truly His.

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(Documentation for above stated facts and quotations is available from the author)

## CONTRIBUTIONS

Robert Pitts (in memory of Eva “Tootsie” Davenport).....	\$40
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than here on earth (Matt. 6:20).

### EVIDENCES OF A NON-GROWING FAITH

**Those who do not have a growing faith will not appreciate God and his word enough to find out how to live as Christians.** God would have all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2:4). Paul revealed that the Jews had a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge and went about to establish their own plan of righteousness while rejecting God's plan (Rom. 10:2-3). Unless Christians have the proper respect for God and his word, they will not study enough to be able to rightly divide the scriptures (John 5:39; 2 Tim. 2:15). Christians with a non-growing faith will be unable to discern between right and wrong (Heb. 5:12-14).

**Partial obedience on the part of Christians is an example of a non-growing faith.** We have taught for years that denominational people are wrong by not doing "all" that God requires to become a Christian. Christians who do not want to render complete obedience are just as wrong (James 2:10; 4:17). Christianity is not based on the smorgasbord approach of choosing only those things which we agree with and that please us. We should always seek to please God and not ourselves (John 8:29; Matt. 3:17; 1 Thess. 4:1). God's people need to be honest enough to take the same medicine that we often give to others.

**The attitude of wanting to be served rather than rendering service to others is further evidence of a non-growing faith.** Christians should look for opportunities to serve God and others rather than wanting to be served (Matt. 4:10; Phil. 2:4). Christ came not to be ministered to, but to minister to the needs of others (Matt. 20:28). The Lord also taught that the one who was the greatest, was the one who became a servant (Matt. 23:11). The real servant of Christ will, by love, serve others (Gal. 5:13). Those who do not enjoy rendering service to others, will not enjoy Heaven because those in Heaven will serve God (Rev. 22:3).

**Preoccupation with material things is an indication of a non-growing faith.** The engrossment in material things reveals that Christians are in love with the world and at the same time are at enmity with God (James 4:4). The love affair which Christians carry on with the world is only a temporary thing because all material things will be destroyed when Christ comes again (1 John 2:15-17; 2 Peter 3:10). The cares of the world, riches and the pleasures of life choke the spiritual life out of Christians and they become unfruitful (Luke 8:14). The craze for materialism leads those involved to forget man's most important possession which is his soul (Matt. 16:26).

**A non-growing faith is evident in the worship and work of Christians.** Those who have a non-growing faith have a tendency to become a spectator instead of a participant in the worship and work of the church. Most of the criticism received is by those who are spectators and not participants. Those with a non-growing faith expect to go to Heaven on a second-handed faith and piggy-back on the efforts of others. There is a failure on their part to understand that we will not be judged on the basis of what others have done, but on an individual basis of what we have done (Matt. 16:27; Rom. 2:6; Rom. 14:12; 2 Cor. 5:10).

Growing faith takes effort on the part of Christians. Only those with a growing faith, which works by love, are

pleasing to God. The lack of a growing faith may well be responsible for many of the problems we have in the church today. When one develops a growing faith, it is beneficial to him and also to the church. All of us should make sure we have a growing faith.

## HOW DO YOU RESPOND TO THE WORD OF GOD?

**ANGRY** — 2 Kings 5:10-11; Acts 7:51-59

**ATTACKING** the Author & Authority — Acts 17:32-33; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Rom. 1:16-17; Col. 3:17

**ABUSING** the Word by Altering it — 2 Peter 3:16; 2 Cor. 2:17; 4:2; Rev. 22:18-19; Galatians 1:6-9

**ASTONISHMENT** — Matthew 7:28

**APPRECIATION** — 2 Timothy 3:15-17

**ADORATION** — Psalm 1:1-3

**AFFECTION** — Psalm 119:97

**AWE** — Nehemiah 8:5

**ACCEPTANCE** — James 1:21-22

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