

"I used to be a
Bible teacher."

TC's Thoughts for Discussion

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It is my personal observation that "prophet" and "apostle," etc., are the laughable titles that men who're convinced that they're "extra special" bestow on other men who come to think themselves "special"...but not quite as "special," you know, as those "extra special" men who gave them those titles. (You may have to read that more than once to understand what I've said.)

In the visible church, there are "special" Christians and "regular" Christians. The "regular" Christians honestly think they've hired those "special" Christians to study the scriptures, do all their critical thinking and fulfill The Great Commission for them. They sit uselessly in the proverbial bleachers, cheering the action on the playing fields. As in football and such, the players inevitably become enamored with themselves—the observable heroes of the incredibly naïve cheering crowds.

In THE Church, there are no "special" Christians: The playing field is level—even instruction, correction, reproof and occasional rebuke are RECIPROCAL.

Jesus' humble disciples who simply practice "being Christian" while earning a living via secular trades and professions are special. (That was Paul's position...and mine.) Preachers, bishops and theologians are NOT special. Instead, their legitimate function within Christ's body may simply be DIFFERENT from yours or mine [1 Corinthians 12]. Those who believe otherwise cannot be effective in "the ministry." The familiar "I'm 'called and chosen' and you're not" mindset is inappropriate...even if it is subconscious. In fairness, I think it's subconscious for the most part. So who can remedy that?

Here's the essence of something Jim Beatty, a respected Facebook friend, posted on April 1, 2016—

One definition (as used by Paul) is that an APOSTLE was an eye witness to the resurrected Christ. If we use that definition, there is no "succession of apostles," as some claim.

Another definition, per Nelson's Compact Bible Dictionary, is *messenger*: "The authority committed to the apostles by Christ was unique. It could not be transmitted to others. The apostles could install elders or other leaders and teachers in the churches, and they could authorize them to assume special responsibilities, but apostolic authority could not be transferred. Their authority has not come to us through their successors, it has come through their writings which are contained in the New Testament."

Among the confusing messages of the visible church is that each young believer should anticipate a "special" calling, much like the one Samuel experienced. When a young believer fails to receive such a "special" calling, the door is left wide open for a preacher's voice to become "the voice of God"—especially in churches where preachers are perceived to be "special." Many of the naïve faithful come to believe, thence, that their preachers are "called" and the rest of us are "NOT 'called'."

My late mom tried her best to make me into a preacher. My pastor/evangelist dad kind-of-sort-of supported her in that. Mom's motives were purely subliminal, I think:

- To be able to bask in the admiration of her would-be-preacher-mommas peer group
- To qualify her for special preacher-momma blessings in Heaven

The fact that her dad was an uncommonly well-known "super-preacher" may've played a big role in that. She kept telling me I could become the next Oral Roberts and stuff like that. Hmm...

(Read 2 Corinthians 11:5 in several Bible versions to understand the term, "super-preacher.")

Mom was, in fact, a godly woman who would stop to actually get onto her knees and pray for me several times every day. Her prayers were worthy and appropriately effective. They may've been responsible for my acquisition of discernment. Along with that and a touch of Godly wisdom, I have learned to lean more to my God-given intellect than to my feelings in matters of real importance: "The heart [is] deceitful above all [things], and desperately wicked: who can know it?" —Jeremiah 17:9

And there's this:

- > "MY PEOPLE ARE DESTROYED FOR LACK OF [righteousnes?] [sincerity?] [worship?] [prayer?] [hyperspirituality?] [holiness?] [regular church attendance?] [believing "what 'we' believe"?] [faith?] [getting "truly 'saved'?"] [becoming full time Paid Professional Christians?] KNOWLEDGE." —Hosea 4:6

I was a successful Bible teacher for a LOT of years—big sanctuary classes.

I knew what my denomination believed and that's what I taught.

Yes, I should've checked it out to make sure it was true.

So why didn't I do that? Well, maybe I didn't do that for the same reason that you haven't really checked out what your denomination teaches. "In religion and politics, people's beliefs and convictions are in almost every case gotten at second hand, and without examination." —Mark Twain



On April 1, 2016, a respected Facebook friend, Chaplain Tommy Davis, posted this about the unscriptural terms, "clergy" and "laity":

"I was speaking with a judge and we had a lengthy conversation about the believer's calling. I assured the judge that God has called believers to be both 'kings and priests' (Rev. 1:6). The phrase 'clergy and laity' is a fabricated concept unsupported by the new covenant. Believers are called both to the church and the political/business world. A CEO, judge, police officer and any other vocation is equal in calling before the Lord. Too many of us want to decorate the pulpit and then wonder why the Devil is winning in the courts, the schools and [the] corporate business world. If you are not 'salt and light' where you are you will be not be any good in someone's pulpit either. If we are to impact this world for Christ we had better start leading in the church (among believers) and outside of it (among non-believers). To be a holy nation, all believers must be holy (set apart) for God's service (1 Peter 2:9)." —Chaplain Tommy Davis

This link should take you to that post: <https://www.facebook.com/chaplain.t.davis/posts/10209474788614438>.

Dare I conclude without this critical observation?

- Tens of thousands of Christians in the Middle East and North Africa are currently getting burned alive, raped, beaten, drowned and beheaded, etc., by Moslem Jihadists. In the U.S., though, a possible majority of Believers continue to think themselves *EXTRA Special*... "My preacher says we're gonna get raptured out'a here before all that bad stuff starts happenin' here, y'all!"

And many still wonder why the visible church continues to build momentum in its epic failure to accomplish its own man-made mission—"to get people 'saved'." In case you're wondering, the assignment GOD gave us is very different: God's assignment – a.k.a. "The Great Commission" [Matthew 28:19,20] – to THE Church is this:

- (a) Preach the gospel.
- (b) Make DISCIPLES of those who believe it.
- (c) Teach them to do the same.

Who's doing that?

For several 20th-Century decades the visible church filled its pews and its bank accounts with lots and lots of naïve BELIEVERS but very, very few informed DISCIPLES. The 21st-Century visible church scrambled for new marketing methods when the formerly-successful methods had clearly stopped working: For many of the megachurches, at least, free tickets to Heaven, motivational speeches and professional entertainment seems to be working fairly well.

Are they making NEW Believers? "Preaching to the choir" apparently keeps the current followers and those followers' dollars coming back. Most of the would-be NEW Believers have apparently come to think that the visible church has lost all credibility! Can you think of even one reason why they may not be justified in drawing such a conclusion? How might they have sensibly come to any other conclusion?

Chew on that.

—T. C. Newsome 

PS: Post a comment or ask a question: www.DYPK.org/contact.

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