

Why Leaving the Institutional Church is Still Important

A thorough examination of the origins of our modern church practices is beyond the scope of this volume, though it is touched on in a few places. A few titles mentioned in the back of this book do the job nicely and are important reads in my opinion. Therefore I will not spend a lot of



time here trying to convince you of the why you should leave the organized and institutional church. Instead, I will simply be sounding the alarm for you to run out of the building and also be the one shouting that it is still vitally important to do so, despite the creepy opinions out there who would try to convince you otherwise that the edifice is really not on fire and smoking. I prefer reality. Many times it is more important to pay attention to your protective instincts than to wait to digest all of the

reasons why. Both are available to you but sometimes time is of the essence. It could be a matter of life or death.

AS A PRACTICING BELIEVER IN CHRIST, YOU SHOULD RUN, NOT WALK, AWAY FROM THE INSTITUTION AS FAST AS YOU CAN AND NOT LOOK BACK!!! There I've said it. Are you running yet? You need to flee that organized church setting because your spiritual life does depend on it. You will eventually die there – die on the vine. You must flee because that is not your rightful habitat. You are a fish out of water there. It is not of God, it is most certainly man-made. Now, here comes my only disclaimer on the subject: You are excluded from this if you are perfectly content in your place of worship and fellowship, if you are seeing and receiving your Lord there, and if you are being fed and serving your brothers and sisters with a conscience that is at peace. You should stay and not leave as long as that is your true condition. God can and does use the institutional church, everyday, to the degree that he is allowed to. Especially in the areas of salvation and baptism. I know in my own life and in others, God has used organized church atmospheres to bring us along progressively to Himself and to an expression of His Body that is organic. But be forewarned, the deeper you go in your walk with the Lord, be assured that you will outgrow that institutional tutor and you will find Christ leading you out to just Himself as your experience and practice. This has been His way over the centuries. And just because God can and does use something (need I bring up the donkey?), doesn't dismiss His preference and pleasure in regards to His Church. Some argue that in our time. The institution and organization is NOT His choice and intention. It is an unfortunate detriment that He graciously puts up with because of His great love and endless patience. Now, if you are a "content one" in the pew and or sanctuary then you are not really my intended audience anyway. The ones that I am shouting to and calling out are those who are already dissatisfied and who are looking for a way out –

looking for more of their Lord than their present situation reveals. Their instincts are going off like sirens inside them. They are groping for the pastures green.

There are some who believe that the institutional church could be reformed from within. While I applaud their good and godly intentions and admire their hopeful spirit, it is mere wishful thinking at best, not at all grounded in the reality of Christians gathering together. If there were no Christian people involved I would say maybe, but lo and behold, “people” IS the thing in view here. From what I have witnessed in my experience, I am convinced now that we must completely abandon the structures, systems, organization, and offices that perpetuate this beastly imposter and start over from ground zero if we are to have half a chance at realizing a truly organic church atmosphere. If we are to be emboldened to even attempt such a radical move, we must be desperate people and revelation must be granted by the Spirit. Revelation that The Church is something outside of culture – not a product of it – and that there is absolutely nothing new for us under the institutional church sun.

My main axe to grind and primary purpose for sounding the alarm that it is still important to leave the organized system is centered on the doing away with the common but scripturally unsupported pastoral office. This splinter under the nail is almost solely the responsible party for keeping the mechanism running. Regardless of motives and intentions (most pastors I have known are great people with a sincere desire to serve God’s people), the modern pastor is a victim and slave of his office. If only this slightly reformed priest would give up his post and God’s people would be delivered from their co-dependence on the “preacher” then real change could begin. The main point at which the modern pastor frustrates the very purposes and work of God through The Church is that his dysfunctional ways hinder the reality of Christ’s invisible headship in the midst of The Body and render the functioning of every member impossible. It is for those two crucial items that I must contend for and insist upon. Without these being permitted, the saints are NEVER equipped and the ecclesia of Jesus Christ is NEVER realized as intended by the Father.

For the majority of folks who have left and for those who presently are leaving the institutional ranks, there are four general reasons that drove them out: The testimony of the New Testament and the first-century story (our modern practices are nowhere to be found!), most churches and para-church ministries being shallow and superficial (we seem to be content to be entertained a little), no true power to deliver the oppressed and struggling (why has the good stuff supposedly passed away?), and grossly neglecting the poor (we tend to cater to the “got it all together” crowd because they’ve got money). My own reasons include those four and many others. I had been in home meetings as well as church services for as long as I had been a Christian. I hadn’t grown up in church so I didn’t have any natural or cultural attachments that fostered a sentimental dependence. I had studied church history and the origins of our modern

practices. I had read the books and listened to the messages. I was convinced and my departure was long overdue. The two things that actually led me into a “crisis of conscience” and pushed me to finally act were one, instinctively I felt all “wrong” on the inside and couldn’t sit through another service or clergy led meeting. My spirit and God’s Spirit in my human spirit were restless, disenfranchised, and uncomfortable. I was squirming in the pew! Knowing screaming out loud and disrupting everything wasn’t an option – I had to do something to relieve my struggle. And two, I had discovered a church in a nearby large city that was actually practicing the very things that I was so longing to see and experience. A living, breathing, touchable, locatable example and model that I could visit. Now looking back on it, years later, I see how vital it is to have access to a real display, even if you have digested all of the convincing material. In the following section you will read an account by a believer who recorded their experience of visiting an organic church life setting and how important and satisfying it was on a journey of leaving the institution in search of the organism.

By [Jon and Dede Slusser](#)