

Word of the Lord to the church

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Executive Summary

This Word of the Lord compares the six biblical foundational doctrines (Hebrews 6:1-2) and the threefold ministry of Jesus with the practices of the church. These criteria are an indicator for the condition of the church (as the bride of Christ). This is of great importance in view of Jesus' soon return. Recommendations are outlined to correct the faults.

Introduction

- We live in the last days of the end times:
- The birth pangs of the earth (Matthew 24:8): Wars, famines, earthquakes are undeniable and on the increase.
- The mark of the beast (Revelations 13:16-18) on forehead or hand (microchip?) for buying and selling is imminent. This could already be part of the kingdom of the Anti-Christ.
- That means: Jesus is returning soon!

Is the body of Christ ready?

- According to which criteria can we possibly know?
- One Criterion is the progress of the church according to the six foundational doctrines of the faith: Hebrews 6:1-2: „...not laying again the foundation of **repentance** (1) from acts that lead to death, and of **faith** (2) in God, instruction about **baptisms** (3), the **laying on of hands** (4), the **resurrection of the dead** (5), and **eternal judgment** (6).“

1. Foundational doctrine: Repentance

- Jesus said (Mark 1:15)... Repent!
- “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins” (1. John 1:9)
- Which churches clearly teach and practice this?
- As a result, many Christians therefore live a life of clear compromise with sin, despite being born again.
- However, James 1:27 states: “Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: ...**to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.**“
- Today, in many cases, the opposite is practiced: The “spirit of the world” is deliberately invited by Christians. These are symptoms of compromised hearts which need repentance. “Don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God?” (James 4:4).

2. Foundational doctrine: Faith towards God

- Romans 10:17 "Consequently, faith comes ... through the word of Christ", that means, faith is directly linked with the Word of God!
- Most important step of faith: conversion to Christ as Lord and Savior.
- 2. Timothy 4:3 "For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear."
- Have we not already arrived there? Aren't many churches preaching what the people want to hear, and avoiding what they don't want to hear? Why?
- Simple ignorance of God's Word.
- The wickedness of men's hearts!
- The church building trap! Pastors in churches need to attract a lot of people for the sake of the kingdom and for survival. For that purpose, a rather worldly program is often chosen. A beautiful building to host all the attractive activities needs donors. Pastors therefore need to "attract" people and do not freely preach the whole counsel of the scriptures, for fear people would be offended and leave.

3. Foundational doctrine: Baptisms

- Baptize means "immerse". In Hebrews 6:2 the word is in the plural form, i.e., baptisms!
- The New Testament talks about three kinds of immersions (baptisms)
- Water baptism (Romans 6:3)
- Spirit baptism (Acts 1:5)
- Baptism of fire (Matthew 3:11)

Water baptism

- Our role model: As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up **out of the water**. (Matthew 3:16)
- "Are you baptized?" means the same as "Are you immersed?". Therefore, somebody who was only sprinkled with water was not baptized!
- Many churches just don't immerse and therefore cannot fulfill this foundational doctrine!

Spirit Baptism

- Jesus himself said: "... you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.....", (Acts 1:5). That was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost
- Why should this no longer be valid today? The Apostle Paul, our human role model in the New Testament, says to the Philippians (4:9) "whatever you have...seen in me - put it into practice.", and then he points out (1. Corinthians 14:18) "I speak in tongues more than all of you"...
- Comparatively few churches teach and practice this foundational doctrine

Baptism of fire

- Matthew 3:11b: "He (Jesus) will baptize you ... with fire"

- James and John want to sit to the left and to the right of Jesus in glory. Jesus answered: "Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?" (Mark 10:38)
- Highest seats in heaven are obviously reached through the "baptism of fire", that is, through suffering (this, however, does not mean self-chastisement)
- How many churches have ever even touched on this subject?

4. Foundational doctrine: Laying on of hands

- For healing (Mark 16:18)
- For spiritual gifts (1. Timothy 1:6)
- For commissioning (Acts 13:3)
- This is only taught in a few churches, too!

5. Foundational doctrine: Resurrection from the dead

- 1. Thessalonians 4:16 "...For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, ...and the dead in Christ will rise first."
- Is this subject seriously taught in the worldwide church?
- It seems, rather the opposite, that most Christians live as though there is only this life and not another. So, they cannot have internalized the teaching of "resurrection from the dead".

6. Foundational doctrine: Eternal judgment

- 2. Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.
- Do Christians truly understand that life is merely just a journey towards one goal: our own physical death; and after that, the judgment seat of Christ?
- How many Christians live their daily lives in view of this truth? And where is this subject clearly taught?

Result

- Upon analyzing, only few churches would fulfill all six biblical foundational doctrines.
- But it says in Hebrews 6:1: Therefore let us **leave** the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to **maturity**
- So, there is no wonder then about the rather desolate condition of the body of Christ!

Importance of foundational doctrines

- Luke 6:49 But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation (**foundational doctrines!**). The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete."
- That means that those who hear the foundational doctrines and don't obey, will not stand in times of trouble. Those who have not even heard of foundational doctrines cannot even build a proper house (of faith).

- Who else but those without foundational doctrines will be part of the “great falling away” (2.Thessalonians 2:3) and go to destruction?

Jesus demonstrates the foundational doctrines

- Jesus ministry on earth included all six foundational doctrines. Either he was teaching them (Repentance, faith, baptism of fire), demonstrating them (baptism of water and fire, laying on of hands, resurrection from the dead) or he was announcing them (spirit baptism, eternal judgment)
- John 14:12 ...anyone who has faith in me **will do what I have been doing**
- Which Jesus is the church following?

Foundational doctrines through church history

- Although most churches do not teach and practice the whole set of the foundational doctrines, the foundational doctrines have been established one by one throughout church history. Denominations of the past represent milestones of this development:
- 1) Repentance (catholic church – confessional)
- 2) Faith in God (Reformation: Bible is Word of God, being born again: only from this point onward constitutes a biblical church!)
- 3a) Water baptism (Baptists: immersion)
- 3b) Spirit baptism (Pentecostals)
- 3c) Baptism of fire (????)
- 4) Laying on of hands (Charismatics)
- 5) Resurrection from the dead (????)
- 6) Eternal judgment (????)
- The two last foundational doctrines have not been made known in church history on a wider scale. Does this need a new “movement” of God?
- Perhaps strong judgments of God, as outlined in the book of Revelation and confirmed by some prophets of today, are necessary to bring attention to the last foundational doctrines, as well as filling in the “baptism of fire”.

The ecumenical movement

- Pope John Paul II invited 160 and 200 representatives of world religions to Assisi in 1986 and 2002 respectively. Their mission was to pray for world peace. Is this ecumenical movement further preparation for a one world religion?
- For decades Christian denominations have increasingly been attracted to Rome. For what? The catholic catechism does not teach “being born again,” much less further foundational doctrines. What kind of unity should be achieved?

Unity – up to which point?

- John 17:21 „...that all of them may be **one** “. Jesus is obviously envisioning a unity of believers.
- Paul shows the limitation of unity: 1. Timothy 6:3-5: “ if anyone teaches false doctrines and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ (for example foundational doctrines!)... men of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of

the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain. **From such withdraw yourself."**

- 1. Corinthians 5:12b "**Expel the wicked man from among you!**" That includes idol worshippers.
- By the way, neither Jesus nor Paul co-operated with Pharisees & Sadducees or the Romans.

Back to our original question: Is the church ready for Jesus' coming?

- A further criterion is "following Christ"
- Jesus' ministry on earth, which is portrayed 4 times (!) in the New Testament gospels, consisted only of 3 elements (!!!)
- 1. Teaching exclusively the kingdom of God
- 2. Healing the sick
- 3. Casting out demons
- Should the believers imitate the ministry of Jesus?
- John 14:12 "I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me **will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these..." (!!!!)**
- Is the church doing at least the works of Jesus?

1. Teaching on the kingdom of God

- Luke 17:21 states that "the kingdom of God is within you." - that means predominantly through the Holy Spirit in us
- It is therefore of great importance to concentrate on biblical teaching on the kingdom of God, which involves us as believers!
- It is noteworthy that in churches such teachings are not only neglected, but that often the focus is on other topics, of which some are even (partially) outside the scriptures.
- The power of the gospel is in the knowledge of the Word (which is Jesus) – when the "lusts of other things" (Mark 4:19) enter in, there will be hardly any fruit!

2. Healing

- ... is the effect of preaching and application of the teaching of the kingdom of God. Because there is so little healing, could it be caused by the churches lack of knowledge of the Word and the foundational doctrines of the faith????!!!!
- In the New Testament, Jesus ministered physical healing.
- But He also ministered inner healing, according to Luke 4:18: "The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; **He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted**, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, **To set at liberty those who are oppressed.**"
- In many churches are many believers who are of a "broken heart", i.e., dysfunctional in at least one area of their lives.
- Statistical data would suggest that within the church there are more Christians who are broken on the inside, than those who are healed and free.

- What is being done by the churches for the broken brothers and sisters? In many cases, only few know of a biblical solution!
- What's missing? "To make disciples", "to teach them everything that Jesus commanded", which means foundational doctrines (!) - praying, caring, role models (elders & fathers in Christ), love, encouragement, counseling, etc. In one word: healing!
- What is being offered instead? Many other topics and activities, which often divert from the actual problems! However, how far can a wounded army go?
- Inner brokenness does not exclude preachers, pastors and leaders in the church. For example in the USA, this is evidenced by the higher divorce rate among this group than even in the general population. These inner problems, hurts and immoral desires are reflected in their sermons, teachings, churches and even in movements.

Healing - outlook

- There will be an increasing number of broken people, which need healing and are crying out for it – because of the increasing sinfulness of society (fornication, greed, destroyed families, child abuse/neglect, etc.)
- Will the church be able, through biblical means, to take care of her wounded to make them well, so that they can reasonably care for the lost, to lead them to Christ?

3. Casting out demons

- Jesus was casting out demons. The gospels are full of it!
- Modern society is badly mistaken in that they claim that there are no demons. Therefore it has been theologically denied or belittled!
- How come that our Lord, Savior and role model, whom we all supposed to follow, gave us so many examples in deliverance? Was it all for nothing? It was the third element of His ministry!

Many Christians believe: "A Christian can not have any demons"

- 2. Corinthians 11:4: Paul to believers: "...if you receive a **different spirit**"
- Acts 5:3: Peter to believer: "... why has **Satan filled your heart**"
- Believers as instruments of Satan: 2. Timothy 2:26: "...escape the snare of the devil, **having been taken captive by him to do his will (!!!!)**".
- Paul to believers: Ephesians 4:27: "**Neither give place to the devil!**" (This advice would not make sense, if that were not possible).

Some Christians believe: "The disciples did not cast out any demons"

- Mark 16:17: Out of Jesus' own mouth: "And these signs will follow those who believe: **In My name they will cast out demons**".
- Acts 8, 6-7: "And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by **Philip**, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. **For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed**".
- Acts 19, 11-12: "Now God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul, so that even....**the evil spirits went out of them**".

- The reason why many deny that Christians can have demons is found elsewhere: Western society is proud and self-righteous. The thought that you can be possessed by an intruding principality is just unacceptable.
- God is true to his Word, he resists the proud (1. Peter 5:5)
- For that reason churches of whole nations do not receive the ministry of deliverance, with the consequence that the faith is not really "working".

Casting out demons - outlook

- The epileptic son: "he often falls into the fire and often into the water" (Matthew 17:15)
- Demons want to kill, steal and destroy. Even in our time there are more and more Christians, who bring harm to themselves and others (including suicide!)
- When will the church wake up, to give those believers the possibility of deliverance?

Result

- The kingdom of God is insufficiently taught in the churches.
- The bodily sick and broken people are helped too little and not effectively enough.
- Too few demons are being cast out.
- The paradox is: Only through the ministry of Jesus of healing and deliverance through his body, the church, there is the possibility of true happiness and satisfaction (abundant life, John 10:10) from the inside – the very thing the whole world is after. That very thing the church is currently NOT majoring in!
- The world with its psychology can only scratch the surface of things. Without Jesus, the fundamental problem of mankind - sin - can not be addressed nor solved!

Conclusion

- According to the biblical foundational doctrines and Jesus' threefold ministry, the church is only very little Christian.
- Almost all denominations are motivated by ecumenical ideas and are increasingly being attracted to the Roman church. However, their catechism does not even offer biblical salvation.
- Where is the true faith and the true imitation of Christ?

Consequences

- Omission of foundational doctrines and Jesus' threefold ministry will invariably take multitudes away from the tree of life and the New Jerusalem (Revelation 22:19).
- King Saul, the man pleaser, was rejected by God and ended up evil, only because he was disobedient to a prophet's word. How much more we, when we disregard the foundations of the written Word?

Further topics in this context

- Of course, there are more criteria where the difference between that which is, and that which should be, can be drawn out. Here are some examples:
- Biblical versus denominational church structure.

- Personal faith versus political activities.
- Biblical church membership?
- Church versus para-Christian organizations?
- Influence of Greek thinking on theology.
- Future of traditional churches.
- Revival, church growth, the supernatural, spiritual warfare – biblical topics?
- The cost of following Jesus Christ.

Significance of this “Word of the Lord”

- Due to the undeniable signs of the times, which point toward Jesus’ return, the church should consider coming to biblical maturity. The time of “fun and games” where each one was living his faith “as he saw fit” has to be laid aside for this purpose.
- This is a call to repentance, to take seriously the six foundational doctrines as well as the threefold ministry of Jesus.
- Without any seriousness in these foundational things, it will impossible, as a church, as well as individuals to reasonably and biblically serve the Lord.

Reaction to this “Word of the Lord”

- Objection: “The Lord has been working so well without biblical foundational doctrines and the threefold ministry of Jesus”.
- Wrong: Paul speaks in Acts 20:27 to proclaim the WHOLE counsel of God!
- In the end it will be a great shame for the body of Christ, to have used only a minute fraction of God’s potential for us as believers.

The Lord is looking for ...

- People, who are after the kingdom of God (who do NOT want to have 2nd, 3rd, 4th class level of compromise in their lives, teaching, church and ministry).
- Possibilities to bring this Word and these teachings forward.
- Workers/Supporters for seminars, Bible Schools, consultations, etc.

Solutions to this situation

- Proclamation of this word as an inspiration.
- Seminars about the six foundational doctrines and the threefold ministry of Jesus.
- Church consultation to add missing foundational teachings.
- New Bible schools for becoming leaders.
 - A new concept for a Bible school has already been designed.
- Intercession for the church to reestablish these biblical foundations.