

an essay:

BE NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST!

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PREFACE

This paper was written as a response paper to the book “Ashamed of The Gospel - When The Church Becomes Like The World” by John MacArthur, Jr.

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### ABSTRACT

MacArthur observes on page 63 of his book, “The fear of GOD was a central doctrine in the early Church, as in the Old Testament. Unbelievers and believers alike were taught to fear Him... It was that very fear that drew people for salvation and kept the obedient. Salvation doesn’t come from wanting to join the fun and emotional pain - it comes when the heart cries out for deliverance from sin!”

The false idols of pragmatism and modernism as methods of evangelism in The Church today do not declare the great glory of GOD, nor teach men to fear Him, nor lead the lost with any urgency to The Cross of CHRIST. When entertainment replaces worship, and when worldly enticements replace preaching of The Gospel, The Church looses her First Love - and falls into the sin of spiritual adultery. Behold the warning sounded by men like MacArthur to the unfaithful Church on earth today - Let The Church arise and again proclaim the fear of The LORD! AMEN.

### DEDICATION

To the heart of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century English Clergyman - The Reverend Charles Spurgeon - that all men of GOD may desire and work for a pure and holy Church on earth which is true to her Lord JESUS CHRIST.

### EPIGRAPH

MARK 8:38 "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall The Son of Man be ashamed, when He cometh in the glory of His Father, with the holy angels!" [KJV]

## I. BE NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

Our Lord JESUS CHRIST says in MARK 8:38, "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when He cometh in the glory of His Father, with the holy angels." <sup>1</sup> We live in a time and place in The West today when much of The Church herself is ashamed of The Gospel before men and GOD. This is a time and place when men long for soft messages that do not confront them in their sins and make them uncomfortable. Now is an age when much of The Church on earth, leaving her Great Commission to preach The Whole Word of GOD, instead offers this darkened world a dim light of compromised pseudo-gospel deception.

The modern Church today is accommodating sin, embracing methods of the world, gauging success of Churches and ministries on standards of things of the flesh and dishonoring the very precious blood of The Savior Himself. These are the marks today of a perverse lukewarm faith that dishonors The Almighty, does not deliver from bondage, does not alleviate suffering from sin, nor save the souls of sin sick men for the Kingdom of CHRIST! And so John MacArthur's book is aptly titled as an indictment against the corrupt and idolatrous Church today, "Ashamed of The Gospel - When The Church Becomes Like The World." <sup>2</sup>

## II. PATHOGENS OF MODERNISM IN THE BODY OF CHRIST ON EARTH

The roots of this infection of much of the Church today lies in the contagions of pragmatism. This disease within The Church "has its roots in Darwinism, and secular humanism. It is inherently relativistic, rejecting the notion of absolute right and wrong, good and evil, truth and error. Pragmatism ultimately defines truth as that which is useful, meaningful and helpful." <sup>3</sup> The modern Church movement disposes of preaching against sin, Divine judgment, Divine wrath and the need to confess and repent of sin because it makes men uncomfortable. In its place come business models of the world to determine what men are comfortable hearing in their pews, what will satisfy their fallen

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<sup>1</sup> 1, KJV, MARK 8:38.

<sup>2</sup> 2, MacArthur, "Ashamed of The Gospel, When The Church Becomes Like The World."

and fleshly needs and what will be most convenient for them to receive.

Such ministry is not of GOD, but of the devil. Pragmatism can perhaps be a measure of truth and success in business - where the fleshly market of supply and demand reflects what consumers desire and devour from producers. The Church on earth however is not called to deliver to men what their itching ears desire to hear, but rather what The unerring and Divinely inspired Word of GOD commands. The gauge of a successful Church is not to be the opulence of its place of worship, nor how many members it has, nor how much money it collects. These are the filthy passing standards of the world. Rather, her success is to be gauged by the lives delivered from the bondage of sin, her steadfastness in preaching both the condemnation and the grace of our Lord to men and the souls secured for eternal life at The Cross. These in contrast are the pure and everlasting standards of CHRIST JESUS.

### III. THE DISEASE OF MODERN CHURCH GROWTH THEORY

MacArthur sums up the essence of modern “user-friendly” Church growth theory: “Provide non-Christians with an agreeable, inoffensive environment. Give them freedom, tolerance and anonymity. Always be positive and benevolent. If you must have a sermon, keep it brief and amusing. Don’t be preachy or authoritative. Above all, keep everyone entertained!”<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, such experts advocate the message and worship service be tailored to the desires, emotional hurts and worldly interests of the target audience. We are told to omit all from The Gospel that offends the sinner and convicts him of his iniquity. Freedom to continue in wickedness and ungodliness is to be tolerated at almost any cost.

Such pragmatism calls for clergy to never preach that Scripture clearly states there is a hell where all unrepentant unsaved souls are cast away into by The Creator for eternity. We are told to convert the center of attention from the humble and pious worship of GOD to instead focus on the consumer with worldly and pleasing

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<sup>3</sup> 2, MacArthur, “Ashamed of The Gospel,” p xii, What Is Pragmatism?

<sup>4</sup> 2, Ibid., p 45, The User-Friendly Church?

entertainment. If spending the Sunday Sabbath in Church worshipping our Lord is too inconvenient and time consuming, offer shorter services at other days and times - this so the superficial Christian can devote his Sunday afternoons to the pleasures of the flesh along with his heathen neighbors!

We are told the Church that wishes to survive, grow and compete with the world today must assess people's emotional felt needs, be convenient and offer alternative carnal allures of the world within The Church. Potential customers are to be polled to find out what it would take to draw them into a Church, then cater to those interests. We are to take "people's emotional 'felt needs' ... more seriously than the real but unfelt spiritual deficiencies [that only] Scripture addresses." <sup>5</sup>

#### IV. MODERNISM CORRUPTION OF THE CHURCH

The most dangerous threats to the ancient Israelites and then to The Church have always been perversion of Scriptural theology from within The Body - not attacks from without. A century ago, as the modern world brought with it great changes in societies and questions about traditional Christian faith, many in The Church "sought to synthesize Christian teachings with the latest insights from science, philosophy and literary criticism... They emphasized brotherhood and experience and de-emphasized doctrinal differences." <sup>6</sup>

Underlying this past movement were doctrines of blasphemy that dictated changes in the very Christian Faith itself: It embraced higher criticism theory of The Bible, which holds that the Bible is not Divinely inspired by GOD. This lead to antisupernaturalism and the view that all events recorded as miracles in The Scriptures are to be explained away as results of natural phenomenon in nature, human behavior and the evolutionary flow of human history. The result is that orthodox Christian doctrines that have stood for two millenniums have been increasingly infected with theological liberalism which bases its shifting doctrines on the whims of men, departing from the steadfast unchanging

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<sup>5</sup> 2, MacArthur, "Ashamed of The Gospel," p 49, The Customer is Sovereign.

<sup>6</sup> 2, Ibid., p xv, Is Pragmatism Really a Serious Threat?

dictates of Holy Writ.

#### V. THE FEAR OF THE LORD FORGOTTEN IN MODERN CHURCHES?

It has always been the policy of the devil that, if he can not silence and destroy the People of GOD and His chosen instruments to minister to this lost world from without, then he infiltrates to corrupt, silence and destroy from within. Even in the early Church of Jerusalem under Saint Peter, there were those who were corrupt within The Body of CHRIST. MacArthur cites the example of Ananias and Sapphira in ACTS 5 as examples of those who professed the Name of CHRIST as Lord, but in fact were twisted within their souls with greed and deceit.

Ananias and his wife lied to Peter and The Church when they claimed to have given all the money from the sale of their land, when in fact they held back a portion of it for themselves. Their sin was not that they kept a portion of it, but that they lied about the amount being given. Their sin was against The Apostle Peter, their fellow Christians, The Church and most of all against GOD. ACTS 5:3 records, “But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?”<sup>7</sup> At this Ananias was struck dead on the spot by the Hand of GOD. And further ACTS 5:9 of his wife, “Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord?”<sup>8</sup> She too met the same end as her husband. At this we are told that great fear of The Almighty came upon all who heard of this - both within and outside The Church.

Pragmatic modernism within The Church today is of the same sin as Ananias and Sapphira. The swift confrontation of Saint Peter of these sinners openly and the immediate Divine wrath that fell upon them were certainly not in line with the customer first ‘user friendly’ Church concepts today! ACTS 5:11 records, “And great fear came upon all The Church, and upon as many as heard these things!”<sup>9</sup> MacArthur identifies ‘the fear of The LORD’ as the central battle cry of his book. He observes there was great reverence for GOD in the early Church which is severely lacking today, largely due to

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<sup>7</sup> 1, KJV, ACTS 5:3a.

<sup>8</sup> 1, KJV, ACTS 5:9a.



pragmatic modernism of the world having been embraced by much of The Church. Such a Church does no good for the spiritual needs of the world, lost sinners or the converted!

MacArthur observes that unbelievers dared not associate with the early Church for the fear of GOD! He notes, "The fear of GOD was a central doctrine in the early Church, as in the Old Testament. Unbelievers and believers alike were taught to fear Him... It was that very fear that drew people for salvation and kept the obedient. Salvation doesn't come from wanting to join the fun and emotional pain - it comes when the heart cries out for deliverance from sin!" But when The Church embraces the world's ways and coddles the wicked, "haughty sinners who ought to approach GOD in terror... are emboldened to presume on His grace" and continue on in their sin!<sup>10</sup>

#### VI. THE CHURCH CAN NOT SERVE TWO MASTERS

JAMES 4:4 warns us, "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with GOD? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of GOD."<sup>11</sup> Embracing this fallen world instead of our Lord is spiritual adultery! For if we truly love GOD with our entire hearts, minds and souls, we can not be also friends with this fallen world and its perversions. ISAIAH 31:1 states, "Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek The LORD!"<sup>12</sup>

Shall the people of GOD go back to Egypt for deliverance and security? Should we not rather be dependant solely upon The Divine Maker for our strength and preservation? Ancient Israel was called to be a light to the gentiles and a glory to The LORD, but they failed miserably. Divine judgment and wrath fell upon their heads time and time again, until they were wiped from the face of the earth as a nation for almost two millenniums. Since the coming of JESUS CHRIST, The Church on earth has been

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<sup>9</sup> 1, KJV, ACTS 5:11.

<sup>10</sup> 2, MacArthur, "Ashamed of The Gospel," p 63, Knowing The Terror of The LORD, We Persuade Men.

<sup>11</sup> 1, KJV, JAMES 4:4.

called in Israel's place with the fuller Revelation of grace at The Cross to be a light to all men and a glory to her Lord. But she, like ancient Israel, is to a great degree in this age failing in the same way.

Why is The Church today failing in The West in her mission? Because she has bought the demoniac lie that she can serve two masters - both GOD and the world. She has allowed her methods and theology to be shaped by the fallen things of the world, rather than the Only True Word of GOD. Worldly appeal, rather than being faithful to The Almighty, has become her new song of seduction. I JOHN 2:16 warns, "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."<sup>13</sup> These are the same temptations the devil used to entice Adam and Eve to sin and bring them into rebellion to GOD! And so "we have the extraordinary spectacle of Church programs designed explicitly to cater to fleshly desire, sensual appetites and human pride!"<sup>14</sup>

MacArthur calls for The Church to return to the full preaching of The Gospel: "The Great Commission is not a marketing manifesto. Evangelism does not require salesmen, but prophets. It is The Word of GOD, not any earthly enticement, that plants the seed for the new birth" in the lost souls of men!<sup>15</sup> What the world needs today, as it has always needed, are faithful men of GOD who desire to rescue suffering sinners from sorrow, pain and damnation. Men need true worship and not entertainment; faithful Bible preaching and not popular fads and gimmicks! The fruits of The Church trying to serve both CHRIST and pragmatism yield not godliness and greater evangelism success, but only worldliness and unbelief. From such idols The Church must turn away.

## VII. ENTER THE REVEREND CHARLES HADDON SPURGEON

The 19th Century English Reverend Charles Haddon Spurgeon was a man who stood against modernism in The Church in his age. He saw The Church abandoning

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<sup>12</sup> 1, KJV, ISAIAH 31:1.

<sup>13</sup> 1, KJV, I JOHN 2:16.

<sup>14</sup> 2, MacArthur, "Ashamed of The Gospel," p xvii, Is Worldliness Still a Sin?

<sup>15</sup> 2, Ibid., p xviii, Is Worldliness Still a Sin?

orthodox theology, methodology and witness in favor of adopting theories, methods and allures of the supposedly enlightened views of the godless wisdoms of the age. Perhaps his most memorable messages were his 'Down-Grade' articles warning The Church to reject modernism and remain true to her Lord. MacArthur observes that "Biblical Truth is like the pinnacle of a steep, slippery mountain, Spurgeon suggested. One step away, and you find yourself on the down-grade. Once a Church or individual is on the down-grade... recovery is unusual and occurs only when Christians get on the 'up-line' through spiritual revival." <sup>16</sup>

For his opposition to modernism in The Church and advocating that she remain true to orthodox theology and methods, Spurgeon was censured by his Baptist denominational authorities. He was heavily criticized, attacked and resisted for his call to The Bride of CHRIST on earth to keep herself pure. He at the end of his life took the dramatic step of withdrawing from his Church denomination. He saw the false doctrine, pragmatism and worldliness in The Church of his day for what they were - works of the devil come to destroy the power of The Saints and deny lost men peace and salvation in CHRIST. With such false Christianity he would not compromise, nor would he bargain with it. Nor can we today.

#### VIII. JUDGMENT BEGINS AT THE HOUSE OF THE LORD

I PETER 4:17-18 declares, "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of GOD: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel of GOD? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" <sup>17</sup> If The Church does not turn from worshipping at the false idols of pragmatism and modernism, returning to serve and worship only her Lord JESUS CHRIST, Divine judgment and wrath are the unavoidable results. An unholy and corrupt Church can not minister to save souls in CHRIST, nor see hearts converted, nor lives changed to righteousness, nor be a light to men and a glory to GOD.

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<sup>16</sup> 2, MacArthur, "Ashamed of The Gospel," p 21-22, Christianity on the Down-Grade.

<sup>17</sup> 1, KJV, I PETER 4:17-18.

MacArthur cites warnings against worldly folly compromising The Church from previous generations. Charles Spurgeon warned in 1887, “When the old Faith is gone, and enthusiasm for The Gospel is extinct, is it no wonder that people seek something else in the way of delight? Lacking bread, they feed on ashes; rejecting the way of The Lord, they run greedily in the path of folly.”<sup>18</sup> And of A. W. Tozer in 1955, “For centuries The Church stood solidly against every form of worldly entertainment, recognizing it for what it was - a device for wasting time, a refuge from the disturbing voice of conscience, a scheme to divert attention from moral accountability. ...[But today she has joined] forces with the great god entertainment... Religious entertainment is in many places rapidly crowding out the serious things of GOD.”<sup>19</sup>

Can a Church that embraces entertainment over worship, frivolity over preaching The Gospel, toleration of sin over calls for repentance at The Cross minister to the lost of this world? MacArthur observes that the Church which embraces “frivolous diversions and carnal amusements” - un-Biblical follies before the false gods of pragmatism and modernism - “would eventually destroy people’s appetites for real worship and the preaching of GOD’s Word.”<sup>20</sup> As was ancient Israel, now The Church is called to be a light to the unsaved and a glory to The Divine Creator. But when The Bride of CHRIST is unfaithful - bowing down at the feet of other gods rather than keeping herself pure for her Lord - is it any wonder that she fails to convert the lost? And is it any mystery that GOD extinguishes the flames and takes away the lamp stands of such heathenized Churches?

## IX. A BIBLICAL PRESCRIPTION FOR EVANGELISM

MacArthur considers the pastoral advice Saint Paul gave to Timothy at length in I and II TIMOTHY. He concludes that none of Saint Paul's counsel is compatible with

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<sup>18</sup> 2, MacArthur, “Ashamed of The Gospel,” p 67, Gimme That Show-Time Religion. MacArthur quotes from an article by The Reverend Charles Haddon Spurgeon entitled, “Another Word Concerning the Down-Grade,” The Sword and The Trowel, August, 1887.

<sup>19</sup> 2, Ibid., p 68. MacArthur quotes A. W. Tozer, “The Root of the Righteous,” Christian Publications, 1955.

<sup>20</sup> 2, Ibid., p 69. MacArthur quotes A. W. Tozer, “The Root of the Righteous,” Christian Publications, 1955.

today's popular ideas of market-driven Church growth, worldly programs, watered-down Gospel preaching and entertainment as worship ideas. Rather, "Paul commands Timothy 1) to be faithful in his preaching of Biblical Truth; 2) to be bold in exposing and refuting error; 3) to be an example of godliness to the flock; 4) to be diligent and work hard in the ministry; and 5) to be willing to suffer hardship and persecution in his service for The Lord." <sup>21</sup>

The model to which The Church must return is laid out from II TIMOTHY by MacArthur: First, "remember your calling." <sup>22</sup> The man of GOD is answerable to GOD and must be true to Him - not the world and the fallen desires of men. II TIMOTHY 4:1 states, "I charge thee therefore before GOD, and The Lord JESUS CHRIST, Who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His Kingdom." <sup>23</sup> Our focus must not be on what men think, but on what GOD decrees. The Minister's works shall stand or fall before The Messiah Himself. To Him our testimony must be true.

Second, "preach The Word." <sup>24</sup> Preaching to the hard hearts of sinners is not a pleasant task, but it is a Biblical command which we must obey. Thus Saint Paul counsels Timothy in II TIMOTHY 4:2 to "Preach The Word." <sup>25</sup> The Biblical command is not to offer worship as entertainment, nor infect the Word of GOD with worldly wisdom, nor conduct surveys on what fleshly delights might draw the unchurched through the doors of the local congregation of believers.

Third, "be faithful in and out of season." <sup>26</sup> Biblical Truths and doctrines are not outmoded, simply because we live in an age of pagan skepticism. In this age of lostness, there is only one hope for lost men - The Church and the Divine Message of grace in CHRIST JESUS that she is to preach. II TIMOTHY 4:2 continues, "...be instant in

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<sup>21</sup> 2, MacArthur, "Ashamed of The Gospel," p 27, Toward a Biblical Philosophy of Ministry.

<sup>22</sup> 2, Ibid., p 30, Remember Your Calling.

<sup>23</sup> 1, KJV, II TIMOTHY 4:1.

<sup>24</sup> 2, MacArthur, "Ashamed of The Gospel," p 30, Preach The Word.

<sup>25</sup> 1, KJV, II TIMOTHY 4:2a.

<sup>26</sup> 2, MacArthur, "Ashamed of The Gospel," p 32, Be Faithful In and Out of Season.

season, out of season." <sup>27</sup> In times when righteousness reigns in the land, and in times when spiritual darkness takes hold, the man of GOD is to call sinners to repent and receive the grace offered to all men at The Cross of CHRIST boldly.

Fourth, we are to "reprove, rebuke and exhort" the lost. <sup>28</sup> In this mission we are not to waver, no matter what comes against us by the hand of men or demons. Thus Saint Paul continues in II TIMOTHY 4:2, "reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." <sup>29</sup> We are to exhort with faithful patience and Biblically correct doctrine all those who will otherwise remain outside of earthly deliverance and spiritual salvation. One does no service to the sinner by coddling his chosen idols in a cloak of blindness, pretending they are of no importance to The One Who sits upon The Throne of Heaven.

Fifth, "don't compromise in difficult times." <sup>30</sup> MacArthur observes, "Fearless preaching is all the more necessary in such dangerous times. When people will not tolerate the Truth [of GOD], that's when courageous, outspoken preachers are most desperately needed to speak It." <sup>31</sup> Though men's itching ears today desire to be tickled with toleration of wickedness and sin - desiring only to know of GOD's love and grace without hearing of His wrath and condemnation - the faithful preacher will not waiver from speaking The full Gospel. Thus it is written in II TIMOTHY 4:3, "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears." <sup>32</sup>

Sixth, "be sober in all things." MacArthur takes this advice from Saint Paul to Timothy in II TIMOTHY 4:5 and comments that being "sober means self -controlled, steady, attentive... The excellent Minister is a solid person, a stable person.. not a pursuer of whims." <sup>33</sup> Where are The Church's preachers standing ready to speak

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<sup>27</sup> 1, KJV, II TIMOTHY 4:2a.

<sup>28</sup> 2, MacArthur, "Ashamed of The Gospel," p 33, Reprove, Rebuke and Exhort.

<sup>29</sup> 1, KJV, II TIMOTHY 4:2b.

<sup>30</sup> 2, MacArthur, "Ashamed of The Gospel," p 34, Don't Compromise in Difficult Times.

<sup>31</sup> 2, Ibid., p 35, Don't Compromise in Difficult Times.

<sup>32</sup> 1, KJV, II TIMOTHY 4:3.

<sup>33</sup> 2, MacArthur, "Ashamed of The Gospel," p 37-38, Be Sober In All Things.

orthodox theology, pure doctrine and unaltered Scripture? If ever there was an age in which sober clergy were needed - an age which shirks not from calling evil good and good evil - surely this is it.

Seventh, "endure hardship" for the sake of preaching The Cross - both within The Church and to the lost outside The Church.<sup>34</sup> Thus St. Paul continues in II TIMOTHY 4:5, "endure afflictions."<sup>35</sup> This is given in the imperative as a command to the preacher Timothy. This is the cost to be paid by faithful clergy who will not back down from preaching against sin and the need for sinners to confess, repent and truly convert. And having done so, the faithful preacher of The Gospel can expect to be hated by the world and resisted by the wicked.

Eighth, "Do the work of an evangelist." Here MacArthur continues to quote from II TIMOTHY 4:5, noting that "Paul was encouraging Timothy to reach out beyond the comfort level of his own flock and boldly proclaim The Word to unbelievers." Saint Paul commands that the faithful Christian minister to the saved is also to be a faithful evangelist to the lost. So MacArthur observes that Saint Paul advised Timothy to "face the world courageously and preach CHRIST crucified. ...to proclaim sin, righteousness, judgment and GOD's Law. ...to declare the depravity, not the dignity of humankind. ...to herald the Second Coming and warn of eternal judgment. ...to magnify The Cross, the Resurrection, the Atonement, grace and faith."<sup>36</sup> Can we, if we be faithful servants of our Lord, do any less?

Ninth, "fulfill your ministry."<sup>37</sup> The faithful minister is one who does not serve GOD with a half committed lukewarm heart, but with all his heart, mind and soul. For if we truly love GOD and our neighbor as CHRIST Himself commands us - whether we are but layman or ordained clergy - we will not shirk away from every opportunity to proclaim as did John The Baptist in MATTHEW 3:3, "Prepare ye the way of The Lord!"

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<sup>34</sup> 2, MacArthur, "Ashamed of The Gospel," p 38, Endure Hardship.

<sup>35</sup> 1, KJV, II TIMOTHY 4:5a.

<sup>36</sup> 2, MacArthur, "Ashamed of The Gospel," p 39, Do The Work of an Evangelist.

<sup>37</sup> 2, Ibid., p 39, Fulfill Your Ministry.

<sup>38</sup> Thus II TIMOTHY 4:5 ends with the admonition, "make full proof of thy ministry." <sup>39</sup> Where ever and when ever we may find ourselves as Christians, The Lord has placed us there to do His work of evangelizing the lost with uncompromising and bold testimony of The Cross. On the day of our judgment before The Throne of CHRIST, every man will be called to give an account of the time and opportunities he was given to proclaim The Gospel in all its power and glory. GOD forbid that we who name The Name of The Bread of Life should be found to have not made full proof of all such opportunities!

#### X. LET THE CHURCH ON EARTH REPENT AND RETURN UNTO THE LORD

MacArthur observes that Spurgeon grieved deeply for the apostasy and compromise he saw within The Church in his day. Looking at the state of The Church in The West in our own age and the condition of the perverse pagan society in which we live, the pious man today covers his head with ashes and dons sackcloth before The Throne of Heaven in mourning. O LORD, that The Body of CHRIST on earth in this time and place would heed this warning from Spurgeon: "Where The Gospel is fully and powerfully preached, with The Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven, our Churches do not only hold their own, but win converts; but when that which constitutes their strength is gone - we mean when The Gospel is concealed, and the life of prayer is slighted - the whole thing becomes a mere form and fiction." <sup>40</sup>

Saint John records GOD's warning to the impure Church at Laodicea in REVELATION 3:15-19 thus, "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou

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<sup>38</sup> 1, KJV, JOHN 3:3b.

<sup>39</sup> 1, KJV, II TIMOTHY 4:5b.

<sup>40</sup> 2, MacArthur, "Ashamed of The Gospel," p 119, The Power of GOD Unto Salvation. MacArthur again quotes from The late Reverend Charles Haddon Spurgeon in his article,



mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.”<sup>41</sup>

The Church today must ask herself who and what is her first love - the things of this fallen world or her Lord JESUS CHRIST. Is there any greater grief to the very heart of The Savior than when a part of His Church on earth becomes so compromised with the allures of worldly things that she “is not disturbed at hearing heretical teaching, and is not vigorous in the defense of The Truth? This spirit of indifference is the most tragic thing that can happen to a Church.”<sup>42</sup>

The modern pragmatic programs of today’s un-Biblical Church growth proponents see any means to entice the lost into The Church as justified before men. But they forget that before GOD they have made The Bride of CHRIST on earth wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked! For they have replaced worship with entertainment, Biblical preaching with allures of the flesh, and true Christian discipleship with fads of fading earthly foolishness!

Lukewarm faith of shallow depth is the sad fruit of these modernistic pragmatic trends in The Church today. Just as The Almighty warned the ancient Church at Laodicea, so today He counsels the unfaithful Church. She is to “buy not ordinary gold, but refined gold, referring to that which would glorify GOD,” for this alone is true wealth to The Church. She is not to wear the filthy linen of a compromised love for CHRIST, but to “wear white clothes..., symbolic of righteousness... [as a covering for her] spiritual nakedness.” For her spiritual blindness she is to apply the eye salve of fidelity to only The Lord JESUS CHRIST, thus restoring her “spiritual sight.”<sup>43</sup> Only then will The Church be able to do the work of Christian evangelism to the lost and minister to the faithful as she is charged to do by GOD.

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“Another Word Concerning the Down-Grade,” *The Sword and The Trowel*, August, 1887.

<sup>41</sup> 1, KJV, REVELATION 3:15-19.

<sup>42</sup> 3, Wycliffe Bible Commentary, REVELATION 3:14-22, p 1504.

<sup>43</sup> 4, Bible Knowledge Commentary, REVELATION 3:15-16 & 18-19, p 940 & 942.

## XI. IN CONCLUSION

The faithful Christian is bound to join men of GOD down through the ages who have called upon The Church to keep herself true for her Husband and Master JESUS CHRIST - men like Saint Paul, Saint John, Spurgeon, Tozer and MacArthur. For The Messiah declares to all men in REVELATION 3:20, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me!"<sup>44</sup> To those who open the door of their souls to CHRIST JESUS as Lord and Savior, humbly confessing and repenting of their sins, He bestows the true wealth of salvation and peace that is beyond all passing earthly treasures! But if The Church is unfaithful to The Lord, to The Gospel and to Biblical evangelism, where will the lost sinner hear The Son of GOD calling him unto salvation?

Thus does MacArthur remind The Church that GOD is sovereign over the salvation of men's souls, reminding the Christian man that his greatest treasure is the grace and mercy of GOD bestowed upon him! This is a treasure to be shared with his fellow man in bold Christian love! O Bride of CHRIST on earth, rise up and return again to your First Love! O Body of CHRIST on earth, cast away your false idols of the world and take up again The Cross! O sons and daughters of The Son of GOD, fix again your eyes first upon He Who redeemed you from enmity with The Creator!

O Divine Creator of All Things, let The Church on earth again proclaim The Gospel with the full power and authority that CHRIST promises to her, if she will but carry forth the light of The Cross to all men! Let The Church again remember her Great Commission to evangelize all men with Biblical Truth, sound doctrine and steadfast love to GOD and men! O Lamb of GOD Who taketh away the sins of the world, may The Church in this time and place recall Your Command in MATTHEW 28:19-20: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in The Name of the Father, and of The Son, and of The Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen!"<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> 1, KJV, REVELATION 3:20.

<sup>45</sup> 1, KJV, MATTHEW 28:19-20.

For as MacArthur quotes Spurgeon, “How is the world to be saved if The Church is false to her Lord? How are we to lift the masses if our fulcrum is removed? If our Gospel is uncertain, what remains but increasing misery and despair? Stand fast, my beloved, in The Name of GOD! I, your brother in CHRIST, entreat you to abide in the truth. Quit yourselves like men, be strong. The Lord sustain you for JESUS’s sake.<sup>46</sup> O Heavenly Father, let The Church arise and again declare the fear of The LORD! In The Name of GOD The Father, The Son and The Holy Ghost. AMEN.

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<sup>46</sup> 2, MacArthur, “Ashamed of The Gospel,” p 42, Holding Fast The Faith. MacArthur quotes a sermon of The Reverend Charles Spurgeon entitled “Holding Fast The Faith.”

## XII. REFERENCES

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