

Kingdom thoughts

Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe. Hebrews 12:28

BMI Devotional September 2014

Sorting through

As I read, watch and think, I observe there are a plethora of ideas floating around in church circles.

We are all bombarded with these ideas and I find I am not as well equipped to assess their worth as perhaps I should be. In the last Kingdom Thoughts I looked at ways we can be more confident about identifying the truth or otherwise from this great sea of ideas, or doctrines.

As I look back over more than 45 years in Pentecostal churches I have observed many ideas that have gained favour only to fall from favour and be all but forgotten until the next revival of that idea. Perhaps you, too, have had opportunity of observing many of these trends and perhaps like me have wondered at their worth.

- I remember being told that if I did not dance (jump up and down on the spot) I would grieve the Holy Spirit and frustrate the growth and development of our church;
- It was important to have three only gifts of the Spirit operate in one service and that this should happen during the communion service.
- Next we needed to identify the 'territorial spirits' in our area and remove them before we could see church growth... and to remove these spirits we should identify them by name, otherwise they may not respond.
- Perhaps the most persistent trend was that Jesus was going to return by the early 1980s, for sure. Or the 1990s at the latest. Or now perhaps the early twenty-first century?
- Then I learned that this is the age of the church team — the age of the individual leader is over!

- Then more recently, despite the fact that Australian pentecostals had believed and practiced the ascension gifts of Christ for many years, there came a revelation from the USA that God was restoring the prophetic ministry to the church, and then, if that was not effective enough, we discovered God was restoring the apostolic ministry to the church — and of course with that came a multitude of new apostles!
- Now we understand that signs and wonders, begun in Jesus ministry, are the true mark of the kingdom of God having arrived.
- Then, to confuse me further, I discovered that as a Christian I don't sin — I have achieved sinless perfection without effort and I can do whatever I want because I am free from the law.
- Then I really struggled with the idea that I must preach in such a way as to attract people to my church. That means don't speak about sin, as people don't like that. With that I discovered there are definite methods by which I can grow a church and become successful.
- And on the list goes on and on!

Perhaps all the above have some aspects of truth, but how and where do we find these ideas in Scripture? Sure we can run with every new *idea* that comes to the church, but it seems to me that in the end it is the Bible that is our standard and if I can't find it in scripture it is probably not a good idea.

Ecclesiastes tells us 'there is nothing new under the sun', so let's be careful with the latest and greatest. Don't rush in where angels fear to tread, but consider and ponder in the light of scripture and talk with the brethren.

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