

March Membership Madness

Part 1

Why Membership?

1) The true Church will make a stand.

a) The true Church will be a contrasting community.

Matthew 5:14 - You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.

Our biblical attitude and convictions toward sex, gender, and marriage cannot be hidden and it should not be hidden.

Matthew 5:14-16 - ... *A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. v. 15 Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. v. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.*

b) The true Church will be a prophetic community.

i) Our convictions and our message cannot be hidden because we are a prophetic voice in the troubling times.

ii) The Church must tell the truth in this anti-Christ, post Christian culture.

iii) The gospel is THE message that changes lives and HEALS nations and cities.

c) The true Church will be a suffering community.

John 15:18-19 NLT - *If the world hates you, remember that it hated me first. v. 19 The world would love you as one of its own if you belonged to it, but you are no longer part of the world. I chose you to come out of the world, so it hates you.*

i) Don't be surprised that we live in a world where people are becoming more and more blatant in their attack on Christians.

ii) 2 Timothy 3:12-14 - *Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, v. 13 while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. v. 14 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed...*

2) Wickedness is on the rise.

a) Jesus said in the last days "wickedness will increase" (Matthew 24:12 NIV).

b) Battle lines have been drawn; the Church is a target.

2 Timothy 3:1-5 - *But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. v.2 For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, v.3 heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, v.4 treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, v.5 having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people.*

We are seeing this Scripture being fulfilled as heartless, brutal, treacherous, and reckless people seem to be more and more emboldened in their hatred for Christians and the Christian community.

i) Sexual Orientation and Gender Radicals

- (1) In the culture, in the courts, and even in casual conversation, it is increasingly obvious that a new concept of “sexual liberty” trumps religious freedom. This new reality has begun to impact churches, ministries, and individual Christians across this nation.
- (2) This new concept of sexual orientation and gender liberties has led to the passage of ordinances which are in direct conflict with our biblical faith.
- (3) Furthermore, those who are promoting these ordinances will be making a practical attempt to legally compel Christians and their churches to accept, endorse, and even promote messages, ideas, and events that violate their faith.

ii) Violent Attacks Increase

Won't happen here? In Baton Rouge (my home town) 2006, a man barges in and shoots the pastor and five church members while kidnapping his wife and kids against their will.

(1) Deadly Force Instances Involving Churches:

(a) 2000	6 instances	9 deaths
(b) 2005	10 instances	19 deaths
(c) 2010	102 instances	51 deaths
(d) 2015	248 instances	76 deaths

(Carl Chinn “Evil Invades the Sanctuary”)

iii) Innocent in the Church Targeted by Sexual Predators

Paul told Timothy that in the last days evil people (imposters), will go from bad to worse and they will creep into households and capture the weak (2 Timothy 3).

3) Three Necessary Actions

- a) A clear policy statement on marriage and human sexuality
- b) A detailed facilities and property usage policy
- c) A formal and detailed membership policy and process

- i) We need to know what we believe and why.
- ii) We need to know those who labors and serves among us.

1 Thessalonians 5:11-13 KJV - *Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do. v.12 And we beseech you, brethren, **to know them which labour among you**, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; v.13 And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves.*

- iii) We need to know that we are all committed to the same God and the same goals.

1 Corinthians 1:10 NIV - *I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought.*