

21 Contrasts Between Commercial and Biblical Christianity

After Pentecost (Acts 3 and later), Christ-followers were first involved in something called “the Way” (Acts 24:22). After the gospel progressed to the non-Jewish world with the planting of the church in Antioch, the world called Christ-followers “Christians” because they were made up of both Jews and Gentiles who exhibited a radical devotion to be like Christ (Acts 11:26).

Since Christianity was legalized by Emperor Constantine in the Edict of Milan (A.D. 313), Christianity went from being “the Way” to an institution that included nominal members who knew nothing regarding the radical faith of their early forbears. Since that time Christianity has become a popular, commercialized entity with only a remnant of followers with a biblically-based, radical commitment. (By “radical” I do not mean extreme or fanatical with odd anti-social and/or violent behavior; I mean the dictionary definition: “radical: affecting the fundamental nature of something; far-reaching or thorough.”)

Unfortunately, what many today deem as radical was considered normal Christianity in the early church, and what is considered normal in the present church would be considered compromising to the early church.

The following are contrasts between commercial Christianity and biblical Christianity:

1. Commercial Christian pastors preach culturally accommodating messages. Biblical Christian pastors preach culturally convicting messages (Acts 2:37-38; Acts 24:24-25).

2. Commercial Christianity encourages adherence to the status quo. Biblical Christianity encourages reformation of the status quo (Acts 17:6).

3. Commercial Christianity invites. Biblical Christianity proclaims (Acts 17:23).

4. Commercial Christianity converts people to their churches. Biblical Christianity converts people to Jesus (John 1:12-13; Acts 8:35).

5. Commercial Christianity encourages congregational membership. Biblical Christianity develops world-changing disciples (Acts 6:7; Matt. 28:19; 2 Tim. 2:2).

6. Commercial Christianity separates faith from public policy. Biblical Christianity applies the gospel to policy (Matt. 5:13-16).

7. Commercial Christianity is defined by the state. Biblical Christianity redefines the state of affairs (Dan. 4:19-37; Acts 8:4-8).

8. Commercial Christianity is complicit with the powers that be. Biblical Christianity casts down the ungodly powers that be (2 Cor. 10:3-5).

9. Commercial Christianity is a sweet-smelling savor to those who are perishing. Biblical Christianity is a sweet-smelling savor to those who are being saved (Phil. 2:15-16).

10. Commercial Christianity is not distinguishable from the world. Biblical Christianity lives in the world but is not of the world (John 17:14-15).

11. Commercial Christianity often uses biblical language for secular reasons. Biblical Christians often uses secular language for biblical reasons (1 Cor. 9:20-23).

12. Commercial Christianity is man-centered in its goals.

Biblical Christianity is God-centered in its goals (Col. 1:15-18).

13. Commercial Christianity elicits praise only from people. Biblical Christianity brings favor from both God and people (Acts 2:47).

14. Commercial Christianity leaves a temporal imprint. Biblical Christianity leaves an eternal imprint (Heb. 11:4).

15. Commercial Christianity leaves a legacy of compromise. Biblical Christianity leaves a legacy of sacrificial commitment (2 Tim. 4:6-8).

16. Commercial Christianity attracts followers by compromising the truth. Biblical Christianity attracts followers through the promotion of the truth (Acts 2:40-41).

17. Commercial Christianity is one step away from being irrelevant. Biblical Christianity is always in or near revival (Acts 9:31).

18. Commercial Christianity accommodates a backslidden lifestyle. Biblical Christianity accommodates a lifestyle of faith, fidelity and freedom (John 8:31-36).

19. Commercial Christianity emphasizes hyper-grace without moral obligations. Biblical Christianity preaches a radical grace that produces radical sanctification (Titus 2:11-12; Rom. 8:3-4).

20. Commercial Christianity brings about a commitment to Sunday services. Biblical Christianity brings about commitment to a life of service (John 13:13-27).

21. Commercial Christianity invites people to make Jesus our personal Savior. Biblical Christianity admonishes people to surrender to Jesus as our Lord so He can save us (Rom. 10:9-10).

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