

Are You Ready for a Holy Ghost Building Inspection?

We must use the right building materials if we want our ministries to stand in the day of His visitation.

Every state in this country has strict building codes. You can't just buy a piece of land and throw up a structure any way you choose. Local governments have standards for foundations, floors, drywall, roofs, exhaust systems, water heaters, wiring, lighting and sanitary drainage. In my neighborhood you can't even erect a shed in your backyard without a permit, and an inspector will always drop by unannounced to make sure you followed the rules.

These codes are important in Florida where I live. You don't want to discover during a hurricane that your contractor used shoddy plywood or defective concrete when he built your house or condo. Bad construction just might send your roof into a neighbor's yard!

It's ironic that our society does not tolerate sloppy building, yet in the charismatic church we place little emphasis on code enforcement. In fact, in our freewheeling movement we celebrate the independent spiritual contractor who uses questionable materials and answers to no one. Much of our movement during the past 30 years has been built like this—and today we are discovering that what we thought was sturdy was actually stuck together with cheap nails, substandard wood, thin glue and duct tape.

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That creaking sound you hear is the sagging of rafters. The Lord has entered our crooked house with His holy plumb line

and a clipboard—and He is not pleased.

Did you know that God has a building code? I prefer the way The Message Bible translates the apostle Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 3:10-15: "Take particular care in picking out your building materials. Eventually there is going to be an inspection. If you use cheap or inferior materials, you'll be found out. The inspection will be thorough and rigorous. You won't get by with a thing. If your work passes inspection, fine; if it doesn't, your part of the building will be torn out and started over. But you won't be torn out; you'll survive—but just barely."

Paul says Jesus will inspect our buildings using the ultimate test—the fire of His holiness. The New American Standard Bible translation says: "Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work will become evident ... for the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work" ().

I am challenging Christians today to prepare for a building inspection. If we ignore God's codes our churches and ministries will not stand in the day of visitation. We must especially return to four basic building materials that have been ignored in this current season:

1. Sexual purity. It should go without saying that church leaders must live in moral and marital faithfulness. Yet when we look around today we find that ministries are tolerant of flippant divorce, hidden adultery and even unspeakable perversion. Some ministers admit to serious moral failures yet they never step out of ministry even for a week to get counseling. God has issued His clear warning. Ministries that tolerate sexual sin are already crumbling. It does not matter how big your auditorium is, how massive your television outreach, how many people shout during Sunday sermons or how enduring your spiritual legacy may seem. You can preach about God's grace all you want, but you are trampling on that grace

if you continue to practice immorality.

2. Financial integrity. Jesus drove the greedy moneychangers out of His temple with a whip. He requires faithfulness of His stewards. Ministries that have committed spiritual extortion will have a day of reckoning—not necessarily with the IRS but certainly with the heavenly Auditor. Those who sell prophecies or charge \$1,000 to gullible people to make them “spiritual sons” will soon lose their platforms. Those who misuse God’s money to buy Bentleys, vacation homes and expensive clothes and shoes will soon experience the Great Repo.

3. Christlike humility. We cannot build God’s house with pride and carnality. In the early days of our movement God winked at our immaturity—but we have no excuse today. Mature leaders should act like servants, not rock stars or mafia bosses. We must trade in our entourages and high-minded demands and return to the way of the Master—which includes the manger (humble beginnings), the donkey (a humble ministry style) and the towel (serving those we are called to lead). God resists the proud, and any church that embraces the bless-me gospel of egotistical charlatans will not enjoy His manifest presence.

4. Theological soundness. We can walk in humility, integrity and purity and still fail if we mix error with truth. We must preach Christ and Him crucified. We must contend for the faith that was delivered to the saints. We must guard the flock from deception and avoid the subtle lies and compromises that creep in from our culture and from occult influences. In segments of our movement today, charismatic theology has been diluted with New Age spirituality, universalism, pop psychology, Gnosticism, false prophecy and just plain weirdness. We need to reactivate the neglected gift of discernment and get rid of the theological hay and stubble that has caused our movement to lose its credibility.

Are you ready for your inspection? May God give us the grace to renovate the areas of our lives, our churches and our

ministries that have not been built according to His standards.

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