

Hung Up

Several years ago, God was moving in the existing churches and we were finding him in a very new and fresh way. The new wine was flowing, our hearts were bursting and the Kingdom of God was coming next week.

It didn't.

So we started looking round for a good reason, some awful blockage which had prevented the forward rush of God's Holy Spirit.

It was easy to find. Every time we stepped into the routine of our customary church meeting, we felt stifled by the musty air of death, generations old. When we had our informal gatherings in home or hired hall, God really met us. Back "in church" it seemed as though he was on holiday.

Those of us who were in a position to change things tried to do so. Meetings were re-vamped, the house meeting was recognised, encouraged and included. We were going to move with the wind of God.

For others, this approach was not radical enough. The old wineskin was dead and encrusted with age. It might be a nice idea to have this new "flow" in the old buildings, but we knew it could not really work; we needed to be free. So we left.

It was great. Brotherly love was real, money and belongings flowed between us with little or no account taken. God was really at work, and we were able to be flexible and follow his lead without the constraints of church loyalty. Our loyalty was to the whole body and naturally we were closer to those we were involved with. The bigger meetings we had from time to time made it easy to see that God was doing the same thing right through the nation, both inside and outside "the churches".

Those years have passed. The labels we were never going to have are well fixed now. Some of the fire, some of the love remains, but is it perhaps a little less abandoned, slightly restricted by the closeness of the circle?

We have adopted our new structures, though they are no longer new. Sometimes we revise them, but we know them by heart. How can we taste again that rapturous torrent of God's love for us in Christ Jesus? Clear away the obstacles, break up the hardened ground of a path well trodden, let in the sun, the rain, the precious seed of God speaking!

And once again seek to bypass the existing structures or opt out of them? Even those which we have helped to build?

No, just ignore them. We did not go wrong just by making new structures. We went wrong by thinking that they made any difference.

The Church is. God is building it. The only structure that matters is the one he makes, and he is going on building despite all your efforts to help.

And mine, too.

Dave Taylor

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