

Chapter VII

COMPARISONS AND CONCLUSIONS

KEYWORD COMPARISON CHART
 BASED ON THE PREVIOUS THREE CAPTERS, COMPARING THE
 CHURCH OF TODAY, OF PAUL, AND OF JESUS

#	FEATURE	CHURCH OF TODAY	CHURCH OF PAUL	CHURCH OF JESUS
1	SIZE ⁽¹⁾	HUGE	HUGE	LITTLE
2	DIVISIONS ⁽²⁾	MYRIAD	MYRIAD	NONE
3	DOCTRINE ⁽³⁾	DIVERSE	PAUL	JESUS
4	ADMINISTRATION ⁽⁴⁾	VARIED	PAUL	JESUS
5	ADJUDICATION ⁽⁵⁾	VARIED	PAUL	JESUS
6	RECRUITING ⁽⁶⁾	VARIED	WITNESS	WITNESS
7	WORSHIP ⁽⁷⁾	VARIED	BOUND	FREE
8	RELATIONSHIP ⁽⁸⁾	BOUND	BOUND	FREE
9	LIFE ATTITUDE ⁽⁹⁾	POSITIVE	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE

(1) Includes both actual size and attitude to size.

(2) This describes the actual condition.

(3) This row specifies the actual source of doctrine.

(4) Specifies the source of authority and how it flows.

(5) This row identifies the source of authority for the decision making process.

(6) Specifies the method of recruiting.

(7) The manner and order of worship is defined by these words.

(8) This row defines the relationship of the church to the world in each case.

(9) "Positive" is equivalent to love, "negative" is equivalent to hate.

Conclusions

Feature No. 1, size, by itself proves that neither the church of today nor the church of Paul can be identified with that of Jesus, which I have termed the Fellowship of Disciples. Jesus spoke of his "little flock" and proclaimed that its numbers must always be few as specified in Chapter VI. A marble is not a mountain, and there is no method whereby one can identify the marble of Jesus with the mountains of Paul and the church of today. While the Church of Paul was not yet huge, the attitude of Paul looked to a huge church. This can only be because he ignored the words of Jesus and thereby initiated the attitude toward size that prevails to this day. The doctrine of Jesus established a narrow gate on the hard way through which only a few could pass. The doctrine of Paul, perpetuated by the church of today has established a wide gate on the easy way through which every one can pass! Jesus is a stranger to Paul, and Paul a stranger to Jesus.

Feature No. 2 constitutes a second proof that neither the church of today nor the church of Paul can be identified with the church of Jesus. To repeat for emphasis, Jesus stated that there was to be only one flock. His word is true, therefore there cannot even be as many as two flocks among Jesus' Fellowship of Disciples. Yet in both Paul and the modern world, they are myriad. Jesus therefore is building only one flock, or assembly, but Paul and his associates began the process of multiplication whereby the number of flocks today is astronomical. Jesus is a stranger to Paul, and Paul a stranger to Jesus.

Feature No. 3, the source of doctrine, again illustrates the sea change that began with Paul. Jesus was and is the sole source of doctrine for the little flock. Paul made himself the source of doctrine in his churches, other's followed suite so that today every congregation listens to whatever source is most persuasive at the moment. Yesterday it was not only Paul but also Luther, Calvin, Knox, Wesley, Pope, Patriarch, or whoever happened to be most persuasive, and so it continues today. Jesus is seldom heard, and therefore cannot be identified with the source of authority in these churches. If they were listening to him, the contrasts of the first two features could not exist. Jesus is a stranger to Paul and Paul a stranger to Jesus.

Feature No. 4, administration, only confirms the conclusions drawn from No. 3. Jesus is the sole administrator of his little flock of disciples, but Paul established his own administration, named the offices and defined the source of authority and its flow. This began a process that has continued as more and more leaders have made their contributions to the administration of the church in every age. Following Paul's example, many have made themselves the shepherds of their own flocks, but have not heeded the voice of Jesus. Jesus is a stranger to Paul, and Paul a stranger to Jesus.

Feature No. 5 examines the adjudication of disputes. Jesus is the only source of authority for the Fellowship of Disciples, and it is to him that the sheep of his little flock look to resolve every dispute, either directly or through following the adjudication procedure that he specified. This only demonstrates once again that neither the church of today or the church of Paul can be the church of Jesus. Paul began different processes, and therefore he is the first stranger to enter the field. Jesus is a stranger to Paul, and Paul a stranger to Jesus.

Feature No. 6, recruiting, defines the method or methods used to convert sinners and add them to the church. This is the only feature of the nine selected for discussion where Paul conforms to Jesus. As an exception, it only proves the rule and is easily explained because Paul had to begin where he was with what he had. This meant that he found it necessary to persuade and convince by the method of personal witness that Jesus had pursued. If only he had truly witnessed to Jesus, all the features of his church would conform to those of Jesus. He pursued of necessity the method prescribed by Jesus, but because his gospel was so very different, all

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the results are also different. What if Paul had possessed the worldly authority of a Pilate, a Herod, or a Caesar? This man, who called down curses on those who were preaching a different gospel, would surely have utilized every means at his command to suppress their voices and compel every man, woman, and child to be baptized. It is fundamentally impossible to compel entry into the little flock of Jesus because everything depends upon the free choice and will of the individual. This would have been no hindrance to Paul, who wrote:

So it depends not upon man's will or exertion, but upon God's mercy. . . . So then he has mercy upon whomever he wills, and he hardens the heart of whomever he wills. (Romans 9:16,18)

We have no grounds for praising Paul because this feature of his ministry and church conformed to Jesus; he had no choice. In the interval between Paul and today, the history of Christianity has confirmed this conclusion as the church of Paul has expanded into the world and pursued every worldly method at its command. These include persecution, the decrees of emperors and other monarchs, the sword and the baptism of hapless infants to gain new recruits. I recognize that there are persons in the church of today who confine their recruiting method to that of Jesus. Only Jesus knows, but I have hope that they are sheep of his little flock. If they are, however, all features of their fellowship must conform in all points to that of Jesus, and they must be found preaching the same gospel. As to Paul, I find no reason even here to void my previous conclusions: Jesus is a stranger to Paul, and Paul is a stranger to Jesus.

Feature No. 7, worship, continues the disparities of all other features except No. 6. The church of today manifests a great variety in the manner and order of worship when they assemble, and also individually. A few congregations express much freedom in the details of this feature, but most do not and I have concluded that "varied" is the only appropriate key word. Paul's churches often sought a true freedom of expression under the leadership of the Spirit, but he often found it necessary to take charge and issue edicts as to how they were to comport themselves in worship. Those who responded found that both the order and manner of their worship were bound, so that we can only conclude that the worship of Paul's churches was bound to a certain order and manner of expression. Jesus is a stranger to Paul, and Paul is a stranger to Jesus.

Feature No. 8, relationship to the world, returns to the radical digression of the first two features. I have shown above, in Chapter IV, how the church of today is tightly bound to the modern world. Chapter V demonstrates the same for the church of Paul. But the Fellowship of Jesus' disciples is absolutely free from the shackles of this world as expressed in Chapter VI above. It is free, as only the Truth can make one free. The binding of the church and the world began with Paul insofar as the sparse records can determine it. Jesus is a stranger to Paul, and Paul is a stranger to Jesus.

Feature No. 9, life (attitude to life in this world), clearly establishes both the church of today and the church of Paul as having no positive relationship with the church of Jesus, which is the fellowship of his disciples. Here, at the very foundation of the gospel according to Jesus, Paul's gospel, Paul's churches and the churches of today show no acquaintance whatsoever with Jesus. They have utterly ignored The Great Principle of Jesus. They have failed utterly to realize its essential correlation with the Great Commandment to form the Great Correlate. Do we really need to say it again?

Jesus is a stranger to Paul, and Paul is a stranger to Jesus!