

The House Church Movement

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The House Church Movement

Introduction...

- I. The apostle Paul said, *“there must also be factions among you, so that those who are approved may become evident among you”* (1 Cor. 11:19). As true as it was in the church at Corinth, history has shown that every age since has experienced its own spirit of factionalism. Our time is no exception. As Peter said, *“... there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies...”* (2 Pet. 2:1). False doctrines and false teachers abound.
- II. For several years now there has been a phenomenon taking place on the religious scene that has come to be called the House Church Movement.
 - A. These house churches are not merely local churches that begin by meeting in someone’s domicile (e.g. Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:19; Col. 4:15; Philem. 2).
 - B. Rather, this is a movement that for all of its diversity, has a specific agenda and a systematic theology.
- III. This movement is broad in scope.
 - A. Feeling that established churches have lost their spirituality and are frozen in traditionalism, the people of this movement have broken away from mainline denominations to establish these new circles of fellowship.
 - B. It is likely that in the community where you live, you will find some who have left prominent denominations to form house churches.
 - C. LaGard Smith’s book, Radical Restoration, and John Mark Hicks’ work, Come To The Table, have had considerable impact among institutional churches of Christ.
 - D. Among non-institutional churches, this movement has been felt in at least seven states.
- IV. This movement is diverse in nature.
 - A. Some view their participation in the house church movement as an attempt to restore New Testament Christianity.
 1. In his book, Ekklesia: To The Roots of Biblical Church Life, Steve Atkerson writes, **“We propose that the apostles had a definite, very particular way they organized churches, AND that they intended for all churches to follow these same apostolic patterns, even today”** (13).
 2. LaGard Smith views his proposals as **“an attempt to turn back the clock and restore a style of worship more in line with New Testament practice”** (69).
 - B. On the other hand, prominent house church leader Robert Banks writes, **“It is not the re-creation of the first-century church that is the goal. The desire is to recapture the spirit and dynamics of early church life in ways that are appropriate to our own culture”** (24).
 - C. It is, therefore, clear that those involved in this movement are not united in the goals they want to achieve. This also helps to explain, at least in part, why there is such diversity within the movement.
- V. It is because of the diverse nature of this movement that I feel the need to issue to those who read or listen to this lecture a word of caution.
 - A. In the material that I am presenting I realize that I am painting with a very broad brush. I think this approach is demanded by the nature of the material itself.
 - B. It is likely, however, that no one in this movement will accept all of the views that I present in this lecture as characteristic of the movement as a whole, therefore, please read and listen with care.
 - C. Use care not to attribute to anyone a view they do not hold, nor ascribe to them a practice in which they do not participate.

- VI. A General Overview of the Movement
- A. Steve Atkerson, a Southern Baptist preacher who left that denomination to become co-founder and President of The New Testament Restoration Foundation and a leading house church proponent, lists sixteen “**apostolic traditions that should still be binding today**” (18). They are:
1. **The Lord’s Supper eaten as a full meal.**
 2. **The Lord’s Supper partaken of weekly.**
 3. **The Lord’s Supper eaten as the main reason for meeting each week.**
 4. **Interactive, participatory, open church meetings.**
 5. **Mutual edification, encouragement and fellowship as the goals of church meetings.**
 6. **Church government by consensus (elder-led more so than elder-ruled churches).**
 7. **Locally trained leaders.**
 8. **Church eldership that is male, plural, non-hierarchical, homegrown, servant leadership.**
 9. **House churches (smaller congregations).**
 10. **Meeting regularly on the Lord’s Day (Sunday).**
 11. **The baptism of believers only.**
 12. **The separation of church and state.**
 13. **A regenerate church body.**
 14. **Children present in the church meeting.**
 15. **A community based church (daily fellowship).**
 16. **Church reproduction & equipping through the ministry of itinerant church workers (apostles, evangelists).**
- B. Reading through this list, one notes...
1. ... practices that are not in scripture
 2. ... others with which to agree
 3. ... and still others that require more explanation merely to understand (once completely understood, many of these things are found to be unbiblical).
- C. Limitations of time and/or space make it impossible to explain in detail all sixteen of these items. These are listed to indicate the extent of the influences and the direction of this movement, particularly as it arises from the denominational world.
- VII. Among churches of Christ, the greatest influence in this movement is F. LaGard Smith.
- A. In Radical Restoration, he advocates smaller churches meeting in houses, spontaneous, informal worship and changes in church organization with an emphasis on mutual ministry. Smith believes there is no need for a standing church treasury and that we ought to “**get away from the unwarranted idea of ‘giving’ as a mandated ‘item of worship’**” (245).
- B. The Lord’s Supper, according to Smith, “... **was observed in conjunction with a fellowship meal. That is, a normal, ordinary meal with the usual variety of food**” (128).
- C. Comparing the works of Smith and Atkerson, it is impossible not to notice the common threads.
- VIII. Believing that we should “*be on guard*” and “*on the alert*” (*Acts 20:28,31*), there are at least seven erroneous principles being taught and/or practiced among those advocating the move to house churches. By exposing these erroneous concepts, a foundation of truth can be built to combat these insidious errors that are dividing churches.

Discussion...

I. Issue #1 – Worshiping In Houses

- A. It is true, beyond doubt, that New Testament churches often met in houses (*e.g. Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:19; Col. 4:15; Philem. 2*). The claim, however, is made by those in the house church movement that meeting in houses is an exclusive apostolic pattern.

1. Beresford Job of the Chigwell Christian Fellowship in London England writes that after the dispersion from the city of Jerusalem **“...we are left with the simple fact that whenever churches are located in scripture they are always, without exception, in people’s homes” (Part 4 - What the Bible Says, emphasis mine, jhd).**
 2. Smith places great emphasis on what he sees as a pattern by saying, **“Maybe that’s where it all went wrong in the first place. Maybe the church should never have left home” (143).**
- B. The truth is that early churches did not meet only in houses. They also met ...
1. ... in the temple (*Acts 2:46*)
 2. ... by a river side (*Acts 16:13*)
 3. ... in the school of Tyrannus (*Acts 19:9*)
 4. ... and in a synagogue-type place (*Jas. 2:2*).
- C. There is no exclusive pattern regarding the place where Christians of the first century met. Expedience determined where they assembled.
- D. Why is there such strong emphasis placed upon meeting in houses by those in this movement?
1. The answer lies in the fact that they see the function of any given assembly hindered by large numbers.
 2. They believe churches must be small in order to facilitate the informality and spontaneity which they believe characterized the New Testament church.
 3. And that’s our second issue...

II. Issue #2 – Spontaneous, Informal Worship

- A. Describing this aspect of the house church movement...
1. Beresford Job writes, **“When believers came together in each others houses as churches their corporate worship and sharing together was completely spontaneous with no one leading from the front” (Part 3 - Church is Family),** adding that **“all present are free to take part without the controlling presence of anyone ‘leading’ the proceedings” (Part 4 - What the Bible Says!).**
 2. To facilitate this informality and spontaneity, particular seating arrangements are recommended by Robert Banks: **“The best arrangement for a congregation’s meeting is not a rectangle containing rows of seats, all looking forward to what is happening in a space at the front. The best arrangement is a circle, in which each participant can look at the other, address the other, and hear from the other, preferably a circle around a table...” (37).**
 3. Atkerson goes to great lengths to argue from 1 Corinthians 14 that churches must **“...allow any of the brothers who so desire to verbally participate in the meeting” (40).** He emphatically states, **“... holding church meetings in this spontaneous, interactive manner is declared to be imperative...” (37).**
 4. LaGard Smith is a little less dogmatic when he says, **“The gathered assemblies of the primitive church appear to have been far more participatory than what we experience; and, almost of necessity, therefore, more spontaneous and informal” (152).**
- B. While congregational seating arrangements are entirely a matter of expediency, Paul writes in *1 Corinthians 14:26-35,40* to correct the error that Atkerson and Smith advocate.
1. The Corinthian assemblies had become so informal and spontaneous as to become chaotic.
 2. Rather than giving every brother an opportunity to verbally participate, Paul instructed some to **“keep silent” (1 Cor. 14:26-35).**

3. He added that *“all things must be done properly and in an orderly manner” (1 Cor. 14:40)* the effect of which was to produce a measure of structure and formality to their worship.
- C. The worship of the church is always interactive. In the church where I now work no less than fourteen men are scheduled to participate publicly in our worship each Lord’s Day morning.
1. Our worship is emphatically not **“mostly an orchestrated religious spectacle for which we have reserved seats each week” (154)** as Smith has charged.
 2. Our worship is not a **“spectator’s sport” (Atkerson, 36)**.
 3. Each Christian present is encouraged to...
 - a. ... blend his/her voice with others in song
 - b. ... to participate in prayer
 - c. ... and in giving.
 - d. ... The Lord’s Supper is a blessed memorial of Jesus’ body and blood in which everyone shares
 - e. ... and in every sermon preached people are encouraged to follow the Lord’s instructions to, *“... take care how you listen...” (Lk. 8:18)*.
 4. This type of worship is anything but passive.

[A more interactive worship, however, is not the only goal of the house church movement. This movement seeks to destroy the Biblical model of the evangelist in favor of mutual ministry.]

III. Issue #3 – Mutual Ministry

- A. When considering the emphasis that those in the house church movement place upon spontaneity and interactive worship it is not surprising to find Jon Zens saying,
1. ... **“we must confess that the pulpit-tradition is a huge obstacle that blocks obedience to the one-another, participatory dimension of body-life found in the New Testament” (129)**.
 2. Zens quotes Pulpit Commentary scholar, David Thomas who writes, **“Surely official preaching has no authority, either in Scripture, reason, or experience, and it must come to an end sooner or later. Every Christian man should be a preacher” (129)**.
- B. After accusing elders of **“abdicated responsibility for teaching and preaching of the Word by hiring professional ‘pulpit ministers’ (as distinct from full-time elders)” (189)**, LaGard Smith affirms that
1. ... **“The very concept of worship focused around a pulpit flies in the face of the dynamic, mutually-participatory house churches in the apostolic age. Houses don’t have pulpits” (211)**.
 2. ... He concludes, **“Pulpit ministers may be an invention, but mutual ministry is not” (212)**.
- C. Reform is often needed with regard to both the work of elders and the work of preachers.
1. Preachers are often viewed in much the same way as denominational pastors or Congregational CEO’s – and that because we allow ourselves to be forced into those roles.
 2. The eldership is often viewed more as a corporate decision-making “Board of Directors” than shepherds looking out for the souls of men.
 3. Correcting these abuses, however, is not the real change Smith and others have in mind.
 - a. Smith believes that we should convert **“...our own elders into ‘teaching pastors,’ and our pulpit ministers into ‘pulpit-less evangelists?’” (212)**.

- b. This mutual edification doctrine asserts that evangelists are men who only seek to teach the lost and elders address the church. The New Testament does not make these distinctions.
- D. In the New Testament, evangelists, ...
1. ... such as Paul, started churches while others, such as Apollos, continued the work of edification (*1 Cor. 3:4-9*).
 2. ... The evangelist, Timothy, was told to remain in Ephesus (*1 Tim. 1:3*) where Paul himself had labored for two years (*Acts 19:10*).
 3. It is hard to miss the fact that much of Timothy's teaching and preaching as an evangelist was with the church in focus.
 4. Titus, another evangelist, was told that his work among the Cretan churches was to "*set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city...*" (*Tit. 1:5*).

IV. Issue #4 – Church Organization

- A. Church organization is another issue that arises out of the house church movement. It is a matter of historical record that every major apostasy since the establishment of the church on Pentecost has been facilitated by a corruption in the organization of the church. The house church movement is certainly no exception.
- B. In the preface of his work, Banks makes a distinction between a home church and a home-church-based congregation.
1. In his parlance home church refers to an extended Christian family that meets regularly wherever they feel most "at home."
 2. His home-church-based congregation refers "**to either a group or cluster of independent house churches that meet together regularly and have some common objectives or to a local church (whether denominational or nondenominational) that is made up mostly of home churches...**" (vii-viii).
- C. LaGard Smith sees no problem with such a multi-level organization.
1. He writes, "**There is nothing to rule out the possibility that the role of elders in the early church might well have encompassed more than one level of involvement -- even simultaneously. Perhaps there were elders shepherding the disciples in each house, depending upon their size and make-up. And perhaps elder oversight may have been exercised throughout a group of house churches which collectively comprised a larger, recognizable 'congregation.'** More thought-provoking for us, of course, is the third possibility -- that elders in individual house churches might also have come together as a group of city-wide elders to discuss matters of importance to the entire community of believers.... nothing necessarily precludes 'Jerusalem's elders' from being gathered from among elders in a multiplicity of house churches" (178).
- D. The scriptures teach, however, that each congregation is to appoint its own elders whose oversight is limited to that local congregation (*Acts 14:23; 1 Pet. 5:2; Acts 20:28*).
1. Each local congregation in the New Testament, regardless of size, was independent, autonomous, and all-sufficient.
 2. Smith's perverted view of the organization of the church is the seed from which Catholicism sprang and would eventually lead us right back to Rome!
 3. There is no shred of evidence in scripture that would lead us to believe that there is scriptural authority for elders to oversee anything but the congregation in which they were appointed!

4. Further, there is no evidence in scripture for anything such as a city-wide congregational organization made up of smaller house churches.
- E. Herein lies the basic problem. Fundamental to all of these issues is one's view of the scriptures, particularly the silence of the scriptures.
1. If you view the silence of the scriptures as prohibitive (*Deut. 4:2; 29:29; 2 Jn. 9; Rev. 22:18,19*) these innovations are unacceptable.
 2. If you, however, view the silence of the scriptures to be permissive, there is no end to innovations.

[Another focal point of attack from within the house church movement relates to whether or not a local church should have a standing church treasury.]

V. Issue #5 – The Church Treasury

- A. LaGard Smith challenges the use of 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 **“as authority for the proposition that we are commanded to make a ‘contribution’ each Lord’s Day as a part of the divine plan”** (7).
1. He later states, **“If we could ever get away from the unwarranted idea of ‘giving’ as a mandated ‘item of worship,’ and begin thinking of ‘giving’ as a way of meeting special needs whenever they arise, we would not need the same kind of ‘treasury’ to which we are accustomed”** (245).
- B. God has, in the New Testament, assigned work to the local church – i.e., teaching the lost, edifying the saved, and relieving needy saints (*1 Tim. 3:15; Eph. 4:16; 1 Tim. 5:16*).
1. Accomplishing this work in any practical form requires money.
 2. *First Corinthians 16:1-2* contains Paul’s instructions to Corinth for providing benevolent aid to the needy saints of Jerusalem, but more than a benevolence passage, this passage is also a collection passage.
 - a. It is the only passage in the New Testament that shows how a local church collects funds to perform the work of the local church.
 - b. Further, that the church at Corinth kept a standing church treasury is necessarily implied by the fact these contributions were taken on the *“first day of every week... so that no collections be made when I come.”*

VI. Issue #6 – The Lord’s Supper

- A. Perhaps the most recognizable feature of the house church movement is its perversion of the Lord’s Supper.
- B. Consider this detailed description by Steve Atkerson: **“The meal is potluck, or as we like to say, ‘pot-providence.’ Everyone brings something to share with everyone else. When the weather is nice, all the food is placed on a long folding table out in the carport. A smaller card table at one end of the long table contains drinks, cups, forks, napkins, etc. A chest full of ice sits on the floor beside the card table. Kids run wildly around having so much fun that they must be collared by parents and forced to eat something. After a prayer of thanksgiving is offered, people line up, talking and laughing, to serve their plates. In the middle of all the food sits a single loaf of bread next to a large plastic jug containing the fruit of the vine. Each believer partakes of the bread and juice while going through the serving line. The smaller kids are encouraged to occupy one of the few places at a table to eat. (They sure can be messy!) Chairs for adults (there are not enough for everyone) are clustered in circles, mainly occupied by the womenfolk, who eat while discussing home schooling, child training, sewing, an upcoming church social, the new church we hope to start, etc. Most of the men stand to eat, balancing their places on top of their cups, grouped into small clusters and solving the world’s problems or pondering some hot topic of theology. The atmosphere is not unlike that of a wedding banquet. It is a great time of fellowship, encouragement, edification,**

friendship, caring, catching-up, getting to know, praying with, exhorting, and maturing. The reason for the event? In case you didn't recognize it, this is the Lord's Supper, New Testament style!" (23)

- C. LaGard Smith affirms that, in the New Testament, the Lord's Supper was somewhat like our Thanksgiving meals (145-146). He affirms:
1. ... **"... the most universally-overlooked feature of the Lord's Supper as practiced in the primitive church is that – from all appearances – it was observed in conjunction with a fellowship meal. That is, a normal, ordinary meal with the usual variety of food. However, unlike normal, ordinary meals, this combined table fellowship and memorial was shared among the disciples for the special purpose of strengthening, not just their physical bodies, but their common bond in the spiritual body of Christ... From its very inception, therefore, the Lord's Supper was an integral part of a real meal" (128-129).**
 2. ... Smith's fundamental affirmation comes from the institution of the Lord's Supper at the last Passover Jesus observed with his disciples (Matt. 26:20-29; Mark 14:12-25; Luke 22:1-23). He argues that because the Lord's Supper was instituted during the Passover meal, which he calls a normal, ordinary meal, therefore, it should be observed today in the same manner.
- D. First, it needs to be remembered that the Passover meal was anything but a "normal, ordinary" meal. In fact, it was a very unusual meal, observed only once a year, designed itself as a memorial. The table fare of the meal was strictly regulated (*Exo. 12*), consisting of roasted lamb, unleavened bread, bitter herbs, and fruit of the vine (*Matt. 26:29; Luke 22:18*). When Jesus and His disciples sat down to eat the Passover it was anything but a typical meal.
1. If the elements of the Lord's Supper are restricted to unleavened bread and fruit of the vine (something not the case with many in the house church movement), why are not the contents of Smith's "normal, ordinary" meal limited to the elements of the Passover feast. If they are not so limited, why not?
 2. Further, if the elements of the "common" or Passover meal can be changed to bacon and beans, biscuits and greens, by what logic can one not also change the elements of the Lord's Supper?
- E. Second, Jesus only instituted the Lord's Supper on that Passover evening, He did not observe it.
1. Why? Because, neither He nor His disciples could memorialize an event that had not yet taken place.
 2. The Lord's Supper was not a part of the Passover meal, nor an extension of it, but merely the occasion upon which Jesus instituted His own memorial by giving instructions to His disciples on its observation.
 - a. It might also be true that Jesus gave instruction on other subjects while eating with his disciples.
 - b. Must we assume that because the instructions were given at mealtime that they must be carried out at a meal? I think not.
- F. When Paul wrote to the church in Corinth, they appear to have been practicing the very thing that Atkerson and Smith advocate – eating the Lord's Supper in conjunction with a common meal.
1. Paul told them to stop, saying, *"What! Do you not have houses in which to eat and drink? Or do you despise the church of God..." (1 Cor. 11:22).*
 2. And again, *"If anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, so that you will not come together for judgment" (1 Cor. 11:34).*

- G. A New Wrinkle. Recently, a new practice regarding the Lord's Supper has surfaced wherein the church gathers around several tables. In my understanding of the practice, thanks is offered for the bread and it is distributed in loaves, then thanks is offered for the fruit of the vine and it is distributed in carafes. From that point, around their various tables, the participants including women, discuss what the Lord means to them. Perhaps at the conclusion, a man from each table will address the whole assembly to relate what has been said around his particular table. My difficulties with this practice include...
1. The dividing up of the assembly into sub-assemblies into which to take the Lord's Supper.
 - a. Five or six times (depending upon how you count them) in 1 Cor. 11:17-34, it is emphasized that the Lord's Supper is to be taken in the assembly.
 - b. If you can divide the church up into such sub-assemblies to partake the Lord's Supper, what would prevent this from being done in separate homes? (*One church has practiced this!*)
 2. The role of women in such an arrangement. Women are forbidden to speak in the assembly, (in the sense of addressing the assembly)... 1 Cor. 14:34-35
 - a. If it is argued that the assembly is not divided, the Scriptures teach that a woman cannot address the assembly... 1 Cor. 14:34-35.
 - b. If it is argued that the assembly is divided, then where is the authority to partake of the Lord's Supper in such an arrangement?
 3. The Scripture indicates an order in the Lord's Supper... Luke 22:19-20
 - a. The bread was eaten. Then, the fruit of the vine was taken "after they had eaten" (v. 20).
 - b. "After" indicates that one part of the Supper was concluded before the next began. There is no indication of the co-mingling of the elements.
 4. This practice emphasizes a meal than a memorial environment.
 5. The practice creates an environment where people are the focus more than God.

VII. Issue #7 – Gender Roles

- A. Finally, though I am not a prophet nor the son of one, I believe that one of the major issues looming on the horizon concerns the role of women in the church.
 1. The digression from the scriptures on this subject is growing stronger with each passing day and is going to hit the church a roaring freight train.
 2. The house church movement is one vehicle that is bringing this issue to the forefront.
- B. The house church movement itself is actually divided over the issue of gender roles. In the book, *Ekklesia*, two dissenting articles are printed. One of these articles is by Steve Atkerson and the other by Jon Zens.
 1. Atkerson forthrightly says, "...women are to remain silent with respect to speaking in the church meeting" (94). After taking note of the cultural context of 1 Corinthians 14 he adds: "... if Paul had actually intended for women to be allowed to speak n church, he probably would have had to write extensively to convince his readers of such an abnormal practice. However, no such argument can be found in the NT. Instead, there is the command for silence; a command not based on the culture of Paul's day, but upon the universal practice of all the churches, upon the tenor of the Hebrew Scriptures (the 'Law,' v 34), and upon the 'Lord's command' (14:37)" (98).

2. To the contrary, Zens declares, **“The silence position militates against the very thing we are all for – open meetings with mutual participation” (103).** He opines, **“To suggest that sisters cannot offer spoken prayers, directed to the Lord but heard by the whole church, is an extreme and unwarranted restriction” (105).**
3. In his book, The House Church, Del Birkey goes far beyond the view that women may speak in the assembly to argue from Galatians 3:28 the doctrine of egalitarianism.
 - a. He writes: **“The texts of that revolutionary gospel regarding the role and ministry of women in the New Testament house churches can be summarized around nine theses: First, women, alongside men, were full-membered participants in the Christian communities.... Second, women, side by side with men, were partners in leadership and ministry in the early churches.... Third, women, along with men, led in public prayer.... Fourth, women, alongside men, prophesied in the church.... Fifth, women, with and in the presence of men, had authority in the church body.... Sixth, women, in particular, were encouraged to learn the Scriptures.... Seventh, women, even as men, had gifts for edifying the body.... Eighth, wives, as well as their husbands, were partners in mutual submission, arising out of their mutual love.... Ninth, women’s sexual roles were not dichotomized or considered at variance with men’s roles in Christ....” (93-102).**
 - b. Birkey concludes, **“... one cannot separate female subordination from female inferiority. Since women, in fact, are not inferior to males, then, in fact, they cannot be subordinate to men because of their sex” (102).**
4. David Lipscomb University Bible Professor, John Mark Hicks, laments, **“Unfortunately, yet another hierarchy invaded the table. Only males are permitted to serve the table.... Some are excluded from serving the table because of their gender.... When women are excluded from serving at the table, they are excluded from service, not authority.... The exclusion of women from serving the table... is rooted in an inappropriate formalism that turns the assembly of the saints into an institutional hierarchy rather than a domestic (family) table” (172).**
 - C. It is becoming increasingly obvious that one of the driving forces in the house church movement is an increased role for women beyond what the Scripture allows.
 1. In some of the house churches established from non-institutional roots, women are already addressing the assembly, openly conversing during the partaking of the Lord’s Supper, and participating in leading chain prayers in the presence of men.
 2. Brethren, it is later than we think!
 - D. Paul said...
 1. *“The women are to keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak, but are to subject themselves, just as the Law also says. If they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is improper for a woman to speak in church” (1 Cor. 14:34,35).*
 2. Again, *“A woman must quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet” (1 Tim. 2:11,12).*

Conclusion...

- I. We live in troubled times. While acknowledging that there seems to be a spirit of stagnation among some churches, the answer is not to be found in the novel gimmicks of the house church movement in an effort to find a closer vertical relationship with God and a warmer horizontal relationship with one another.
- II. It is true that we need a closer relationship with God and a warmer relationship with one another. Such can only be found, however, by following the instructions of the ancient prophets of God:
 - A. *“Thus says the Lord, “Stand by the ways and see and ask for the ancient paths, Where the good way is, and walk in it; And you shall find rest for your souls...” (Jer. 6:16).*

B. *And again: "Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set" (Pro. 22:28).*

III. It seems that the spirit of our age is, if something is old, it needs to be discarded.

A. Little thought is given to the possibility that some things that are old are so because they are divinely revealed by a God who knows us better than we know ourselves.

B. Little thought is given to the possibility that the reason some things are old is because they have been tried and tested and proven reliable.

C. It was our Lord who said, *"Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away" (Matt. 24:35).*

IV. Please remember that, when this world is on fire and false doctrine and the men who promote them are long gone, God's Word will remain. Let us all pray that God will give us the wisdom to both recognize and preserve the "ancient landmarks."

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