

What is “unchurched”?

In the last decade or two a new term has evolved in evangelical Christianity—the “unchurched.” Past generations used biblical concepts to describe humanity. Terms like lost, unsaved, unconverted, unrepentant, unbeliever, condemned, sinners, and non-born again were preached. These words conveyed the person outside of Christ as guilty and under the wrath of God. Being dead in their sins they’re helpless and hopeless without any ability to change. Their only hope is salvation, being forgiven and born again with new life from God. Jesus Christ, the crucified and risen Lord, is the only means of this salvation. The church is simply to go out into the lost world and preach this good news of salvation in Christ. When anyone trusts Christ alone they then are added to His church.

But “unchurched” doesn’t convey this. It conveys experiencing church as the answer. It conveys the problem is a lack of understanding the church’s culture. And this is thought to be the church’s fault, not the sinners’. Adaptation is the focus, not salvation.

The first goal of this mindset is coming to church, not to Christ. But the dilemma is how to make the church of the holy God comfortable (fun, relaxing, educational, and relevant) to one who doesn’t love the Lord or have a new nature? And how can you make carnal (fleshly) believers at home in a spiritual house? You can’t! So rather than emphasizing conversion or repentance, which changes the person, you change the church.

It seems the question, “*why* is a person unchurched” is not thought through. It would be in most cases because they have no spiritual life or heart for God. But if you see church attendance as the solution, you begin to redesign the church for the sinner – in the name of “grace”. It subtly moves from God’s house to the people’s house. Then everything becomes fair game for change. It becomes something of man, by man, and for man.

It brings the world to the church not Christ to the world. Its terms rarely offend. Being saved is replaced with, ‘to help people *grow* in a relationship with Jesus Christ’. But that is built on the faulty premise that all *already* have a level of relationship with God. Now experience, not repentance is the agenda. Mood music (with each special light bulb costing \$600.00), focusing on relationships (me centered) instead of doctrine (God centered), and in a fearless fun setting is the style. The Spirit gives way to special effects. A personal experience of “Jesus” over interactive fellowship and accountability is in.

What is the Purpose and Character of the Church Meeting?

The purpose is God’s glory: “*Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus*”. The church is for fellowship in the remembrance of the Son in the Lord’s Supper. It’s for the building up of His body into Christ-likeness and holiness. The Spirit, via a plurality of gifts, teaches “*the apostle’s doctrine*” along with prayers and songs offered to the Lord.

Its character is a “*holy temple*” and “*the pillar...of truth*”. So sinning believers are to be disciplined to preserve purity. Because of the deceptions of Satan truth is to be fought for to preserve unity. Headship with God’s different roles for men and women is to be the church’s order in a disorderly world. Thus a holy atmosphere is present for the Lord in His house. It is where all things are “*of him [the Lord], and through him, and to him.*”

{Some Scriptures for the truth of the above teaching. The gospel of salvation is to go into the world that is guilty and under judgment; Mark 16:15, Luke 24:47, Rom. 1:18, 32, 3:19. The church for God's glory where man should not receive glory: Eph. 3:21, 1Cor. 1:29-31. The NT churches as a holy temple and pillar of truth: 1Cor. 3:16, 17, 1Tim. 3:15. Where believers in sin are to be disciplined: 1Cor. 5. Where truth is to be contended for: Jude :3, Eph. 4:12-15, Titus 3:10. Gathering for the fellowship in the Lord's Supper: 1Cor. 1:9 / 10:16,17 / 11:17-34. Gathering with a plurality of brothers teaching and leading the assembly meeting via the gifts of the Spirit: 1Cor. 12:7-12 / 14:23-40. God headship role with the men orally involved and uncovered – and the women covered at times and silent in the church: 1Cor. 11:1-16, 1Cor. 14:34-38. All things of God and for Him: Rom. 11:36}