

## PASTOR OR ENTREPRENEUR?

Shora KUETU

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### 2 •PASTOR OR ENTREPRENEUR

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INTRODUCTION

I have desired to write this book, ever since I received a vision from the Lord, sometime ago. In that vision, I stood before the throne of God and the Lord was showing me that many pastors, after winning souls, would present them to Him only to turn around and leave without entrusting them into His care. This vision was crystal clear. Souls have become the prey of pastors who have forsaken their role of shepherds, to become entrepreneurs. This is nothing short of sin, which is unfortunately taking up ground in many assemblies.

Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. (Colossians 2:8 KJV)

Sin, especially covetousness, is growing rampant in so many assemblies claiming to belong to the Lord, that they are starting to look more like small family businesses rather than the Church that Christ came to build. According to scriptures, this paganization of churches and ministries will keep getting worse until the second coming of the Lord Jesus-Christ.

This fast decline will favor the birth of the apostate church from among the nations without moral laws. In the meantime, those, who would have remained faithful to the Lord, will start home churches to worship God in the simplicity of the pure and true gospel. Indeed, many children of God have already started gathering in homes. But it is worth pointing out that a lot of them have been hurt, disappointed and chocked up by the scandalous and corrupt behavior of so-called christian

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leaders, so much so that they decided to do away with the need for fellowship and that's very unfortunate.

«And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. » (Matthew 24:10 KJV)

In this passage of scriptures, the verb «to offend» comes from the greek word «skandalizo» which means to cause a person to begin to distrust and desert one whom he ought to trust and obey. Indeed, one cannot deny the truthfulness of this statement. For a day does not go by without christians hearing about scandals happening in churches across the world.

It seems that some pastors have forgotten, or perhaps have they always wanted to ignore, that the Bible is the only authority when it comes to church morality. It is the only way through which christians may know the real God. If it were not so, how then would one explain that many people, claiming to belong to Christ, are building churches based on traditions of men rather than the word of God? As far as most church leaders are concerned, the Bible is no longer the only source, when it comes to faith. They would rather refer to numerous worldly books and the experiences of so-called world renown doctors, to lie to the body of Christ and lead them astray. That's why, over 1900 years after the birth of the Church, we have come to a dramatic conclusion: Many local churches have receded from the foundation set by Jesus-Christ and adopted an anti-biblical functioning. Heading these apostate assemblies, is a man, often referred to as the pastor, who rules and dominates over christians that he manipulates without mercy.

Because many have fallen into the trap of these ravening wolves, I thought it necessary to denounce them and warn christians.

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In fact, it is true that the children of God must come out of Babylon to live holy lives while awaiting the rapture of the Church. However, they should have their eyes wide open to recognize wolves in sheep clothing and false doctrines that can lead them astray. This is exactly why this book was written and I pray that by the grace of God, many might be enlightened and return to our divine shepherd, Jesus-Christ of Nazareth.

I dedicate this book, first and foremost, to the Lord Jesus-Christ, my Lord and personal savior, and to my ministerial team, that surrounds and supports me with their prayers and advice.

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### WHEN BABYLON DEFORMS THE ROLE OF THE PASTOR

When we take a closer look at the role of the pastor, as presented and performed nowadays, it is sad to notice the difference from the biblical model put in place by the Lord Jesus, Himself. For many people, it is a full time job like any other, needing theological training and the remuneration that comes with it. Today, there is no need to be called of God to become a pastor because the ordination, initiation ritual needed to become part of the clergy elite, is sufficient.

### ORDINATION OR INITIATION RITUAL OF THE PASTOR ENTREPRENEUR

More often than none, pastors of the so-called revival churches, receive the «sacred ordination» in order to finally join the clergy and be treated as such. This ceremony looks more like the initiation ritual of occult fraternities than the simple recognition of ministries according to the New Testament.

#### a) Ordination in the Roman Catholic Church

Throughout roman history, the word «order» meant, in layman's term, a body (for example the order of medical doctors). Therefore, the word «ordination» meant the joining of an order.

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During the Fourth century, theology and ministries were only accessible to priests and bishops. For that reason, ordination was used, as an introduction ritual.

This tradition is enforced in the Roman Catholic Church to this day. As a result, the Church prays, in a

particularly intense fashion, a great litany, during which, she invokes the Saints while the ordinand is laying down.

Sacramental ordination consists of several steps, which significance we'll be explaining below.

- The laying on of hands by all the bishops symbolizes the transmission of the apostolic tradition and expresses the invocation of the Holy Spirit.
- The prayer of ordination reminds that the ordinand is in the line of chiefs and priests that have always been established by God. The open Gospel is then laid on the head of the ordinand to signify that he is being ordained in the name of the Gospel, that he receives to bring to others.
- The anointing of oil: the head of the ordinand is anointed by the presiding bishop with the holy chrism. This anointing signifies that the Holy Spirit comes inside of him bringing grace for his new mission.
- The delivery of the Gospel stresses on the primary mission of the bishop: preaching the gospel of Jesus-Christ, dead and resurrected.
- The delivery of signs of the episcopal duty: the episcopal ring representing the fidelity of the bishop to the Church, the bride of Christ. It also represents the fidelity of God towards His people. The mitre symbolizes the call to holiness and shows specifically the rank of the bishop among men. Finally, the crucifix symbolizes the crozier, which tells about the mission of the pastor: taking care of the flock.

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The Roman Catholic Church teaches that « tradition, mostly expressed by liturgical rituals and influences from both the western and eastern church, shows that by the laying on of hands and prayer of ordination, the gift of the Holy Spirit is given and sacredness is acquired. As a result, bishops, priests and deacons, respectively, are consecrated to Christ.»

Rather than refuting this idea, many protestant or evangelical churches are, sadly enough, also teaching this heresy.

Because the modern pastor is called to lead the church as a small business enterprise, the ordination ceremony then becomes necessary prior to him taking office. Therefore, a pastoral elite is put in place by religious people, and one must be ordained to become a part of it.

In fact, we ought to put the stress on these prayer rituals of public acknowledgement from which, some christians must benefit for their office to get recognition. Sometimes, these solemnities are so strange that they resemble satanic brotherhood rituals. Ordination or consecration ceremonies are not based on the word of God and are totally unbiblical.

According to Acts 13, Saul and Barnabas were separated unto the Lord by the Holy Spirit and the whole assembly prayed for them before went on a mission. They were never«ordained» by a man, but instead they had the whole congregation's support to undertake their apostolic mission. The Bible makes it clear that the Holy Spirit spoke to them, as they were praying and fasting. They did not need a

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ceremony performed by a member of clergy, whose spiritual authority they would have recognized as superior to their own. To the contrary, it was the other believers, who, although not in ministry, prayed and laid their hands on them!

The laying on of hands was intended for blessing and not to designate them for office, as the calling comes from God. Contrary to popular belief, no ceremony could ever replace the anointing of the Lord on his servants. These practices, endorsing and giving priests a sense of superiority over believers, come from the greco-roman world. Again, we see that the pagan christian church follows these rules, as part of a tradition, without finding out whether or not they come from the world, nor whether they are based on the New Testament or not. This explains why, christians in general, don't trust their fellow brothers and sisters in Christ, nor ask for their prayers and support, without knowing beforehand that the latter was either ordained or held a title of some sort (i.e deacon, elder, pastor...).

It is important to note that ordination does not grant power nor a special authority to the one who has been set apart by the Lord.

During the Fourth century, when pagans converted by imperial decree overflowed the Church, they became totally dependent on their spiritual leaders, who took over the spiritual realm. Indeed, the Council of Nicaea had decided that the Church was only made of the clergy.

Additionally, during this very council, it was made clear that in order to hold any ecclesiastic office, one had to be ordained. That's when the expression «vicar of Christ» started to be used ; the bishop became «an earthly Christ », the «mediator between God and men». As soon as he got ordained, the bishop could no longer get excommunicated, nor be submitted to public penance, no matter the gravity of his mistakes. Clothed in his special ecclesiastic attire and

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wearing the tonsure, setting him apart in appearance from laity, the priest himself would choose which deacons to work with.

Today, many people get ordained in an extravagant manner forgetting that, obedience to divine calling is what gives power, and not ordination per se. A lot of churches are powerless because everything revolves around a man, the professional with a degree in theological studies, who got ordained. The latter has the right to preach, baptize, marry, bury the dead, pray for the sick, pray for deliverances etc. Due to this heresy, Christians have surrendered their spiritual gifts and God-given talents, to their pastors. As a result, one should not be surprised to see the great number of Christians ignoring the ministry to which God has called them. They drive miles to watch a show to the glory of the pastor. All these practices are a mixture of the ordination used by Hebrews under the law and that of Greco-Roman priests. Although, Luther and Calvin are looked upon as great reformers, they have contributed to the propagation of this heresy. According to them, anyone wanting to become a pastor was required to first go through ordination.

#### b) Ordination under the law

It is clear that ordination, as practiced by some evangelical church pastors, was nothing other than a mixture of ordination under Moses and the one practiced in Greco-Roman temples. However, the law of Moses was the shadow of the New Testament (Colossians 2:16-17 ; Hebrews 10:1-2). That's why we should not cling to a shadow but rather to Christ.

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«And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office, even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons. And thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother for glory and for beauty. And thou shalt speak unto all that are wise hearted, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron's garments to consecrate him, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office. And these are the garments which they shall make; a breastplate, and an ephod, and a robe, and a brodered coat, a mitre, and a girdle: and they shall make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, and his sons, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office» (Exodus 28:1-4 KJV)

Under the law, priesthood was only accessible to the family of Aaron, high priest of the tribe of Levi. All the descendants of Aaron, the high priest, were responsible for serving the Lord in the temple. They had to offer sacrifices for their own sins, as well as for the people of Israel.

This office required a consecration ceremony and a special attire to emphasize the dignity that came with it. The word «consecrated» in this passage, «qadash (kaw-dash'») in Hebrew, means «to be set apart», «to be holy», «chosen» for the Lord's service.

In the New Covenant, the word «holy (hagios (hag'-eeos) » which is used to refer to the disciples of Jesus, the Messiah, means the same thing as «qadash (kaw-dash')». In fact, all the disciples of the Messiah are consecrated to the Lord from the day of their conversion, therefore they no longer need to be consecrated for ministry.

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c) The garment of Aaron and its prophetic significance

-The breastplate of judgement : the breastplate was a piece of cloth doubled and square in shape that was put on one's chest; it was tied to the ephod on top by two wreathen chains of gold, and at the bottom, by two blue laces fastened to the gold rings, which are on the four ends of the breastplate (Exodus 28:25, 27,28 ; 39:15-21). The breastplate was a type of cuirass on which were twelve stones for the twelve tribes of Israel. It also contained the Urim (light or revelation) and the Thummim (perfections or truth). Just as Aaron, the high priest, the Lord Jesus our High Priest, today brings our names before his Father, carrying them on his shoulders and in his heart (Romans 8:43 ; Hebrews 7:25).

- The ephod : ephod, which literally means «covering» in hebrew, was made of gold, of blue, and of purple, of scarlet, and fine twined linen, with cunning work. It had the two shoulderpieces thereof joined at the two edges thereof, in the front and in the back by two suspenders worn head first (Exodus 28:6,7). It shall have a binding of woven work round about the hole of it, as it were the hole of an habergeon, that it be not rent (Exodus 28:32). On the shoulders, they placed onyx stones enclosed in settings of gold, and engraved with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel (Exodus 28:9 ; 39:6,7). This garment represents the righteousness, the Lord has covered us with (Romans 5:5). In fact, one cannot stand before God naked. Remember Adam, who hid when God called him because he was naked (Genesis 3:10). The ephod is also a type of the mantle which represents the anointing.

- The robe : the robe of the ephod was a garment by itself, which was different from the ephod. It was blue, sleeveless and the hem thereof had blue, purple and scarlet pomegranates with bells of gold between them (Exodus 28:31-35 ; 29:5 ; 39:22-26). Ordinary priests wore a tunic made of linen (ordinary ephod), probably without any ornament.

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Figuratively, the robe symbolizes justice, purity and holiness (Job 29:14 ; Revelations 3:4-5). In Isaiah 61:10, God clothes his people in salvation and covers them with a mantle of righteousness: He grants them justification that they wrap themselves with and they wear a garment of praise (Isaiah 61:3 ; Matthew

22:11 ; Revelations 7:9,14). Blue, purple and scarlet pomegranates symbolize the testimony of the priest.

-The tunic : the underwear or tunic (ketonet in hebrew ; chitôn in greek), went down almost to the knee. This clothing usually had short sleeves but there was also a longer version of it, with long sleeves (Genesis 37:3 ; 2 Samuel 13:18). It was sometimes woven seamlessly (John 19:23,24). It was held together by a belt. Whether at work or at home, the tunic was usually the only piece of clothing, people wore. It is important to note that in the biblical sense, the word «naked» means to be solely clothed in a tunic (for example, John 21:7). In the Prophets, prisoners of war are often spoken of as being naked, however, on Assyrian representations, jews in captivity are portrayed wearing a tunic. This piece of clothing has the same significance as the ephod.

- The tiara: the tiara (mitre, diadem, turban) was a type of headdress for Aaron, the high priest. This tiara, of which scriptures do not specify the shape, had a golden plate with the engraving : «Holiness unto the Lord». A blue ribbon fastened this plate to the front of the tiara. In the Bible, the head represent the chief, or crowning. The tiara suggests the crowning but also holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord (Hebrews 12:14).

- The belt : this belt was embroidered in blue, purple, and scarlet fine twined linen (Exodus 28:39-40 ; 39:29). It symbolized truth, fidelity, justice and strength. In fact, the Bible affirms

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that God puts a belt on the loins of both kings and his servants (Job 12:18 ; Isaiah 22:21) or that He has girded David with strength (Psalms 18:32). We should also point out that Jesus-Christ has righteousness and faithfulness for his belt (Isaiah 11:5). Likewise, the Apostle Paul admonishes believers to wear truth for a belt (Ephesiens 6:14).

- Undergarments : they went from the loins down to the thighs (Exode 28 :42).

d) The ordination of Aaron and his sons

«And thou shalt put them upon Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him; and shalt anoint them, and consecrate them, and sanctify them, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office. (Exodus 28:41 KJV)

«And this is the thing that thou shalt do unto them to hallow them, to minister unto me in the priest's office: Take one young bullock, and two rams without blemish, And unleavened bread, and cakes unleavened tempered with oil, and wafers unleavened anointed with oil: of wheaten flour shalt thou make them. And thou shalt put them into one basket, and bring them in the basket, with the bullock and the two rams. And Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shalt wash them with water. And thou shalt take the garments, and put upon Aaron the coat, and the robe of the ephod, and the ephod, and the breastplate, and gird him with the curious girdle of the ephod: And thou shalt put the mitre upon his head, and put the holy crown upon the mitre. Then shalt thou take the anointing oil, and pour it upon his head, and anoint him. And thou shalt bring his sons, and put coats upon them. And thou shalt gird them with girdles, Aaron and his sons, and put the bonnets on them: and the priest's office shall be theirs for a perpetual statute: and thou shalt consecrate Aaron and his sons. And thou shalt cause a bullock to be brought before the tabernacle of the congregation: and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the bullock. And thou shalt kill the bullock before the Lord, by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And thou shalt take of the blood of the bullock, and put it upon the horns of the altar with thy finger, and pour all the blood beside the bottom of the altar.

And thou shalt take all the fat that covereth the inwards, and the caul that is above the liver, and the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, and burn them upon the altar. But the flesh of the bullock, and his skin, and his dung, shalt thou burn with fire without the camp: it is a sin offering.

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Thou shalt also take one ram; and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the ram.

And thou shalt slay the ram, and thou shalt take his blood, and sprinkle it round about upon the altar.

And thou shalt cut the ram in pieces, and wash the inwards of him, and his legs, and put them unto his pieces, and unto his head. And thou shalt burn the whole ram upon the altar: it is a burnt offering unto the Lord: it is a sweet savour, an offering made by fire unto the Lord. And thou shalt take the other ram; and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the ram.

Then shalt thou kill the ram, and take of his blood, and put it upon the tip of the right ear of Aaron, and

upon the tip of the right ear of his sons, and upon the thumb of their right hand, and upon the great toe of their right foot, and sprinkle the blood upon the altar round about. And thou shalt take of the blood that is upon the altar, and of the anointing oil, and sprinkle it upon Aaron, and upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon the garments of his sons with him: and he shall be hallowed, and his garments, and his sons, and his sons' garments with him. Also thou shalt take of the ram the fat and the rump, and the fat that covereth the inwards, and the caul above the liver, and the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, and the right shoulder; for it is a ram of consecration: And one loaf of bread, and one cake of oiled bread, and one wafer out of the basket of the unleavened bread that is before the Lord:

And thou shalt put all in the hands of Aaron, and in the hands of his sons; and shalt wave them for a wave offering before the Lord. And thou shalt receive them of their hands, and burn them upon the altar for a burnt offering, for a sweet savour before the Lord: it is an offering made by fire unto the Lord. And thou shalt take the breast of the ram of Aaron's consecration, and wave it for a wave offering before the Lord: and it shall be thy part.

And thou shalt sanctify the breast of the wave offering, and the shoulder of the heave offering, which is waved, and which is heaved up, of the ram of the consecration, even of that which is for Aaron, and of that which is for his sons:

And it shall be Aaron's and his sons' by a statute for ever from the children of Israel: for it is an heave offering: and it shall be an heave offering from the children of Israel of the sacrifice of their peace offerings, even their heave offering unto the Lord. And the holy garments of Aaron shall be his sons' after him, to be anointed therein, and to be consecrated in them. (Exodus 29:1-29 KJV)

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Based on this passage of scripture, we can see that numerous rituals were followed during Aaron's ordination.

-The washing : which symbolizes  
regeneration (Titus 3:5 ; John

3:5-6) and new birth. God does not need  
theologians, but rather people who have gone through repentance.

No one can serve God without being born again, without their sins being washed away. Water is an image of the Word of God, which cleanses us from all filthiness.

«Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you»

(Ezekiel 36:25 KJV)

- The anointing of oil : in the Bible, oil symbolizes the power of the Holy Spirit, which comes upon us so we would be equipped for ministry.

« How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him (Acts 10:38 KJV)

«But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost has come

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upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. (Acts 1:8 KJV)

- The wearing of clothes : «And that son that is priest in his stead shall put them on seven days, when he cometh into the tabernacle of the congregation to minister in the holy place. (Exodus 29:30 KJV) Clothes symbolize justification.

«Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified» (Romans

8:30 KJV)

Please notice that these clothes had to be worn for seven days, after consecration.

- The animal sacrifices : a bullock, whose blood was used to purify the altar, was offered as a sacrifice and its flesh was burned outside the camp.

This sacrifice was called the sin offering (Exodus 29:10-14), and was the image of the sacrifice of Christ, who has made us holy, so we could stand pure before God (Hebrews 10).

A ram was also offered as a sacrifice to sanctify the altar.

It was a burnt offering that represented the consecrated life of Aaron.

«Also thou shalt take of the ram the fat and the rump, and the fat that covereth the inwards, and the caul above the liver, and the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, and the right shoulder; for it is a ram of consecration: (Exodus 29:22 KJV).

It also symbolizes the life of the believer that has to be offered up to God.

«I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. (Romans 12:1 KJV)

3. Under the dispensation of grace, priests, meaning all the disciples of Jesus, are called to worship God continually by offering themselves up as a sacrifice.

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- The Unleavened bread: «And one loaf of bread, and one cake of oiled bread, and one wafer out of the basket of the unleavened bread that is before the Lord: And thou shalt put all in the hands of Aaron, and in the hands of his sons; and shalt wave them for a wave offering before the Lord. And thou shalt receive them of their hands, and burn them upon the altar for a burnt offering, for a sweet savour before the Lord: it is an offering made by fire unto the Lord. (Exodus 29:23-25 KJV)

In Israel, it was forbidden to put yeast on the offerings

that were to be burnt on the altar

(the loaves of bread were made with

yeast-see Leviticus 7:13; 23:17): «No meat offering, which ye shall bring unto the Lord, shall be made with leaven: for ye shall burn no leaven, nor any honey, in any offering of the Lord made by fire » (Leviticus 2:11 KJV).

Yeast is the emblem of pernicious doctrines

(Matthew 16:11 ; Mark 8:15), and evil (1 Corinthians 5:68

; Galatians 5:9) from which we must by all means keep

ourselves from. As a result, Israelites were not supposed to eat

leavened bread during Passover, nor have yeast in their homes,

for fear of being cut off from Israel (Exodus 12:15,19). The absence of yeast symbolizes the purity that God

requires from his servants.

Today, we no longer need particular clothing (cassocks, togas, scarves so dear to some Pastors), anointing oil or animal sacrifices for anyone with a specific calling. The anointing is given to us by God himself, after a time of preparation in the wilderness. Besides, in the New Testament, the anointing oil was solely used for the sick and with moderation, it was not an immutable doctrine. (Mark 6 ; James 5:14). All these things were only a shadow of things to come. (Hebrews 8 ; 9 ; 1 Peter 3:1-6).

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Ordination, often referred to as consecration, has never been mentioned in the New Testament. Under the law, ordination's role was to consecrate priests for the service of the Lord. Under grace, the disciples of Christ are referred to as saints (Romans 1:7). The word «consecrated» in Romans 1:7, is «agios» which means holy, set apart for the Lord's service. In fact, christians are consecrated to the ministry of Christ since new birth. As a result, their fruits will allow them to be recognized by other saints in a particular ministry (Galatians 2:9).

### 2) THE SERMON AND THE PULPIT

#### a) The Sermon

The pastor entrepreneur is trained in a biblical or theological school. There, he learned to speak, to dress, to move and to carefully prepare his sermon several days ahead of schedule. He is convinced that all of the above make him the authorized mouthpiece of God.

The sermon (homiletics, in greek homilêtikos : the art of preaching ) has become the masterpiece of the protestant cult. Although the Bible encourages the participation of all members during church assemblies (1 Corinthians 14:23-26), reformers have imposed the sermon, which is nothing other than a three point speech (introduction, main points and conclusion).

The sermon has made the pastor the principal mouthpiece of the local church, while christians have been reduced to simple dumb listeners, onlookers that are not allowed to intervene at all, ask questions or even question the teaching of the «man of God».

In most churches, christians do not have the right to speak because only the pastor has that privilege. For instance, there are churches with several services on Sunday

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and this, always with the same preacher : the pastor. The sermon prevents the working of all the members of the body of Christ.

There isn't a single verse in the New Testament making reference to the sermon and this, because : The Lord has said that the Holy Spirit would inspire us in due time :  
«But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost» (Marc 13:11 KJV)

A real messenger of the Lord must always be ready to speak a Word without the need to prepare for it many days in advance. The man of God must have a continual relationship with the Master, who will enable him to preach and set the captives free at all times. It is true that a sermon can cause enthusiasm and emotions but, that won't lead the listeners to true repentance.

Sermons have consequences on the spirit of christians, such as :

- Christians can become dependent on the pastor: they will remain spiritual babies unable to take care of themselves, and always begging for the help of pastors, even for the smallest hurt (Hebrews 5).
- The suppression of gifts and ministries for church members: christians have neither the right nor time to share the revelations they receive at home while meditating the Word of God. Nevertheless, one of the primary goals of church gatherings is, in fact, the exercise of gifts and ministries by the saints, for their mutual edification (1 Corinthians 12).

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- The separation between christians and pastors.
- A comedian, aka the pastor, whose sole purpose is to please the audience. The latter must always be smiling on the pulpit and never show his sadness, nor his tiredness. The pastor plays several roles, he can at the same time be mean to his wife and kids but yet, be a role model in front of believers.
- A passive and idolatrous audience: because christians do not meditate

scriptures, to examine the saying of the pastor, rather than letting the latter read the bible for them. After all, that's what he's getting paid for. How then will Christians attain the perfect stature of Christ in these conditions?

How will they achieve it, if no one encourages them to play an active role during church gatherings?

The modern pastor has been so conditioned by human traditions, that it is nearly impossible for him to leave his pulpit.

#### b) The pulpit

The sermon and the pulpit are inseparable. The pulpit is a type of high tribune, that is usually made of a canopy, in front of which, the priest stands to preach or lecture the audience.

For many pastors, the pulpit is so sacred that they will not share it with anyone else. They are under the impression that this piece of wood, stone or glass, is very holy and should not be defiled by secular people. Some, even go as far as, placing ushers around it so that no one could come close. Nonetheless, teachers of the

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biblical church were not set apart, nor separated from brothers and sisters by the pulpit, but rather, worked among them , being accessible to all.

«Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not» (Matthew 23:1-3 KJV).

Pharisees used the pulpit to impose their traditions and precepts (i.e: tithes), which they did not, themselves, follow. Likewise, today many pastors use the pulpit to take care of business, impose their ideas, or recruit new followers. The modern pastor or entrepreneur, has been trained to play a role, he needs to act holy on the pulpit, and yet behaves differently outside the church. Even when feeling sick, the pastor still pretends to be healthy. The pulpit has turned the pastor into a real actor.

If we applied 1 Corinthians 14:26-33, which encourages christians to participate and exercise their spiritual gifts during church gatherings, we would find mature christians and discover hidden talents. As a matter of fact, ever since we started practicing this passage of Scripture in our church gatherings, we discovered many hidden talents and hundreds of ministerial gifts have been recognized. Praise be to God !

Of course, there can be some abuse, but that's where elders should step in, to watch and help the saints

exercise their gifts correctly. In the church of Gabon alone, over 200 preachers have been trained in just four years time, and that had not been the case since its inception. In Paris, several ministers have also been trained and people, once shy, were able to uncover their callings and gifts, as they were given the opportunity to express themselves.

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If only pastors would stop fearing competition by letting others excel in ministry, our churches would be powerful and full of laborers. However, we notice that many preachers are being eaten up by diverse fears :

-The fear of seeing other ministries used of the Lord : Any other excelling ministry is considered a rival. The spirit of Diotrephes is responsible for this feeling :

« I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church»

(3 John 9-10 KJV).

Many pastors are so afraid of seeing brothers and sisters used of the Lord, that they worry about losing the approval of men as a result.

- Fear of disorder : when the Bible talks about elders being responsible for the good functioning of church gatherings,

it's because there can be room for disorder. Nevertheless, this should not be a reason to muzzle the children of God. A child often learns by making mistakes, however, unless he gets help, he will never learn and, thus, will remain uneducated and immature all his life.

-Fear of contradiction : a pastor, who knows beyond the shadow of a doubt his calling and the veracity of his teachings, has no reason to fear.

How then would he know whether his teachings bear fruits or not, except he lets people express themselves ?

Fear is a feeling of insecurity stemming from the ignorance of one's identity in Christ. It, unfortunately, transforms saints in to spiritual babes, cultivates the clerical mentality in churches, and renders the pulpit sacred.

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### 3) CLERICALISM AND SACERDOTALISM

According to the English Dictionary, clericalism is a policy supporting the influence and power of the clergy in secular or political matters. In other words, clericalism is a belief in an elite group, responsible for deciding church matters.

Sacerdotalism, on the other hand, is a belief in the existence of a divinely appointed mediator between God and men. Any avid reader of the Bible knows that these concepts have no biblical basis whatsoever, because they originated from Ancient Babylon, which according to Revelation 17 is the mother of all religions and cults.

«So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH» (Revelation 17:3-5 KJV).

In this passage, Babylon is represented by the woman, whose birth and projects are described in Genesis 11:4:

« And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth» (Genesis 11:4 KJV).

The tower as discussed here, was called a «ziggourat» (which means «monument») and was over six hundred feet high. From the side, the building looked like a pyramid, which later became the foundation of the babylonian religion. In fact, it appears at first that the project of Babel only seemed to hide the mundane ambition, though unreasonable, of its builders. But in reality, the targeted goals were more perverted than they appeared.

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a) Nimrod, the tip of the tower : the clergy

It is important to note that, only the tip of the tower was supposed to reach heaven. This goes against everything Jesus stands for, he whom being the head , causes his whole body, the Church, to enter into the most holy place (Ephesians 2:17-18 ; Hebrews 10:19-22). This is where we get the origins of clericalism, religions, and cults whose operation rests on the pyramidal model, implying a gradual ascension to the top and a progressive initiation, to climb the ladder. That's why in most religions, those aspiring to leadership have to go through specific rituals and a special initiation ceremony to earn the right to lead. As a result, only the people who went through initiation gain access to this closed circle.

The tip of the tower of Babel, which alone was to touch heaven, was none other than Nimrod, son of Cush, son of Cham.

Nimrod means «rebel», he was a «mighty hunter before the Lord» according to Genesis 9:10, but a hunter of souls, based on the interpretation of Rabbis. The First king of Babylon, was also called Bar-Cush (fils de Cush), from which the name Bacchus is derived, and who later became the god of wine, fleshly pleasures and immorality.

He and his subjects built the city of Babel («the door to heaven») desiring to build a religious city, where man would defy the God of heaven. But God confused the language of the builders of the tower of Babel and the city name became «Bal-Al» which means «confusion».

However, human traditions have kept certain traits of ancient Babel's religion. The example of the tower of Babel is still influencing the architecture of church buildings to this day. No wonder, an extremely ambitious person is referred to using the French expression

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«bâtitteur de cathédrales» which means cathedrals' builder. Besides, doesn't the Roman Catholic Church owe its reputation to huge cathedrals built to welcome the children of God? These buildings appeared for the first time during the reign of Constantine, about four centuries after Jesus-Christ. This roman emperor, who later «converted» to Christianity, greatly changed and politicized the early Church. In order to impose the worship of Christ to his subjects, this latter transformed pagan temples into

«churches» thus allowing them to keep their religious habits by simply changing the name of the divinity they worshipped. This is how he first introduced strange fire and broke a biblical principle, by

using places consecrated to idols and turning them into buildings in which to host christians, who previously gathered in homes. For Constantine, churches had to be huge buildings with an appearance speaking of the glory of God. This way of doing things has separated Jesus-Christ from the heart of worship of saints.

Constantine has, therefore, introduced the vanities of Nimrod in the tradition of the christian church.

Nimrod is a perfect type of the Antichrist to whom Satan will give power and great authority (Revelation 13:19).

Remember that Satan wanted to make a pope of world religion out of Jesus-Christ , when he took him up to the top of the temple in Jerusalem. «Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone» (Matthew 4:5, 6 KJV)

Unfortunately, what Jesus-Christ did not agree to, thousands of pastors have accepted. As a result, they became heads of religious organizations, leaders of entire denominations, created by men. And this, in the likeness of Constantine, who was the self-appointed head of the universal church, also known as

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the official representative of Jesus-Christ on earth and the sole mediator between God and people.

Let's point out as well that in Babylon, only those at the top of the ladder had the right to go to heaven (access knowledge), while the rest of the body remained in the dark.

Therefore, all the churches working with the clergy mentality, either stressing the distinction and separation between clergy and laity, believers and pastors or ruling over others, were all influenced by the Babylonian vision. Besides, every religious organization solely comprised of the pastoral ministry is a bi-product of Babylon.

Let's look at reformed churches as an example. The pastor is part of the clergy and, as such, he sits with catholic clergymen and rabbis in formal meetings. He has gone to theology school. During a special ceremony (initiation), which is often extravagant, he got ordained and thus, possesses special privileges and powers. Now that he is a «professional», it is only logical for him to receive a salary each month.

However, in the New Testament, the distinction between clergy and laity does not exist because this practice comes straight out of Babylon. There is indeed no biblical basis allowing one to affirm that only bishops, pastors, prophets and apostles are ministers of Christ.

This all aims from this hierarchy, first established by Nimrod (Genesis 11) and later carried on by some of the Church patriarchs such as Ignatius of Antioch, Clement of Rome, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Cyprian of Carthage, Constantine and the clergy. Unfortunately, due to the benefits associated with this, many Christians are ready to compromise their faith, just so they would gain access to prestigious positions.

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The Bible teaches us, to the contrary, that every believer is a minister of God, though they are not all called to the same function. Some are called to be pastors according to the fivefold ministries of Ephesians 4:11, others to different gifts or services (Romans 12:3-8 ; 1 Corinthians 12:1-30).

Let's not forget that the word «ministry» in Greek «diakonia» means «to serve others in elementary things». In fact, we should not copy the world and its covetousness: many assemblies give more importance to high offices and consider their leaders to be movie stars.

After Pentecost, the Church was organized under the leadership of the apostles. It was necessary that the Church be composed of diverse ministries, or gifts for edification, instruction and good order purposes. The people that were called in these offices were elected by the assembly of believers and were approved by the apostles (Acts 6:5 and 6:6). Nonetheless, it is worth mentioning that those who were trusted into these offices by their brethren, did not form a separate cast. There was neither clergy nor hierarchy. In fact, all believers are priests (1 Peter 2:9) because Jesus-Christ has made us kings and priests (Revelation 1:6 and 5:10).

Everyone can now draw near to God without going through an intermediary (Ephesians 2:18). This universal priesthood makes sure that there is no elite within the church, since all Christians have the same rights and duties before God. Each Christian is, according to the Bible, a minister of God having received first and foremost the ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18-20). As ministers, Christians must put their gifts or talents to the service of others (1 Corinthians 14:26-27 ; 1 Peter 4:10-11). He is therefore a partaker of God's divine nature, not a spectator.

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Of course, this does not take anything away from the authority aiming from the duties conferred to certain ministries such as deacons and elders, who have been chosen to lead their brethren. For this reason, the idea of having a pastor as head of the local church comes straight out of Babylon.

The very perversion of this system is obvious as the pastor becomes so important that, without him the whole body falls apart. Sadly enough, many churches cease to exist as soon as you take out their pastor, be it for a few months.

However, the Bible clearly teaches that there is only one body, which is the Church (1 Corinthians 12:12-28 ;

Ephesians 4), and most of all one head : Jesus-Christ (Colossians

1:18). We have seen that in biblical churches, there is neither clergy, nor laity. So, why is it then that today, there is an exclusive clerical body making all the decisions? Where did this doctrine come from?

### b) The origins of clericalism and of sacerdotalism

In the early Church, bishops would always appear together and deliberate as a group, without anyone's role being more important than the others.

Nevertheless, as early as the first century, there were men who wanted to rule over the flock (1 Peter 5:3). The Apostle John makes mention of the ambitions of Diotrephes who loved «to be first», in other words, he wanted to be at the top of the ladder. He wanted to take over things as he loved having preeminence.

He is the first person in the New Testament, to have wanted to impose himself as head of the local church. The latter took the local church hostage by considering it as his personal business.

« I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church.» (3 John 1:9, 10 KJV)

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As a result, Diotrephes laid the foundation of clericalism and the changes to follow, would gradually evolve from a college of elders to an episcopal monarchy.

After Diotrefes, many fathers of the church have, by their writings, contributed to the establishment of the pyramidal church model.

Little by little, we witnessed the emergence of a man, who took leadership over the college of elders and later on the title of bishop. Ignatius of Antioch (35-107 B.C), one of the fathers of the Roman church, who wrote his letters at the beginning of the second century in the province of Asia, had high regards for the function of the bishop.

For him, the bishop was God's representative, the living image of the invisible God.

In his letter to the Smyrnaeans, he wrote the following: «See that you all follow the bishop, even as Jesus Christ does the Father, and the presbytery as you would the apostles; and reverence the deacons, as being the institution of God. Let no man do anything connected with the Church without the bishop. Let that be deemed a proper Eucharist, which is [administered] either by the bishop, or by one to whom he has entrusted it. Wherever the bishop shall appear, there let the multitude [of the people] also be; even as, wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church. It is not lawful without the bishop either to baptize or to celebrate a love-feast; but whatsoever he shall approve of, that is also pleasing to God.»

This contradicts the sayings of Jesus-Christ, who said :

«For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them»

(Matthew 18:20 KJV).

Rather, Ignatius will say: «Where the bishop is, there will the church be» (Ministries in the Church, A. Kuen).

This is where the supremacy of the pastor, as the intermediary between God and people, also chief and head of the local church, originated. He is the only person to whom God speaks and who has more anointing than all members of the Church. He alone has the right to baptize, celebrate holy matrimony, distribute a small piece of dry bread or cracker, rather than having the actual breaking of bread, etc.

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Clement de Rome (dead around 100 B.C) was the first christian writer to use the term «layman» to refer to christians and people, in general. The word «layman» has several meanings. If we look at the etymology thereof, we can see that it refers to a member of «laos», which means «the people», a person not qualified to talk or better yet, an ignorant without any formal education. The «cleric» is he who, being in the service of the Church, receives the competence needed to work in ministry.

Cyprian of Carthage (200-258 ap. J-C), would say in his writings that every local church needed to be led by a single shepheard. The concept of a separated priesthood has been essential to the hierarchical structure of many churches. In fact, the word «hierarchical» is derived from the greek «hierus» which is also used for «priest». If this concept of a separated priesthood was ever done away with, it would deeply affect the hierarchical structures of several churches, solely based on earthly

authority.

As a result, some churches claim that they believe in the priesthood of all believers but all the while differentiating between the church's priesthood and that of the church leaders. Because these two concepts are antinomic, this type of declaration can only exist in theory. Besides, many pastors differentiate between ministers of the Word and the average believer.

These distinctions constitute a unbiblical description of the role of the believer in the Church and an attitude of superiority complex from pastors.

The New Testament teaches that all christians, including apostles or pastors, are brothers and sisters in Christ.

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The following portrait paints a picture of how it was intended to function biblically: God is above all and Jesus-Christ is the sole mediator between God and men.

Pastors are just as important as mere christians, as they are all brothers and sisters. There is no man, nor organization supposed to ensure the protection of the children of God, other than the Lord himself. They should freely exercise their gifts and ministries according to 1 Corinthians 14:26-31.

«How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying. If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret. But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God. Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted» (1 Corinthians 14:26-31 KJV)

Please pay close attention to what every christian is called to do during prayer meetings : sing a psalm, teach, speak in tongues, interpret, and prophesy.

In the true Church, worship songs are not reserved to an elite, a team that specializes in music because all christians can, in turn, sing songs

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and share the Word (Ephesians 5:19 ; Colossians 3:16). Though there might be teachers, believers must teach one another, prophesy in turn, for the edification of the assembly.

In this first picture, Christ is the mediator between christians and the Father. Christ alone is the head of the Church, which is his body and all other ministries work in teams and are all equal (1 Corinthians 3). The ministries listed in Ephesians 4:11 are made of plain believers, not having more importance over one another. Notice that the first apostles considered themselves as mere brothers.

«I, John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ».

(Revelation 1:9 KJV)

In the second picture, we have the Babylonian vision, where the pastor considers himself set apart, and vested with the special mission of presenting the needs of the people to the Lord, as Moses would under the law. This is the Bicephalous leadership, where the pastoral couple being the foundation of the church, dominates ( I will expand on this later).

As a result, there is a clear difference between the people (laity) and the pastor ( clergy). This separation aims at convincing christians that they are less important than their pastors.

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The following errors were successfully instilled into christians :

Clergy = priesthood,

the team that's most holy and closest to God.

Priesthood = profession requiring both a salary and a retirement account.

Profession = professional,

other christians are relegated to the rank of spectators.

Let's remember the declaration of Cyprian of Carthage (200-258 B.C) who taught that the only one superior to the bishop was God Himself. He went as far as affirming that he who separated from the bishop, would separate from God. For him, every local church had to have a single leader. He used the word «clergy» to describe priests and bishops. He is also responsible for sacerdotalism, which is the idea of mediation by the priest.

For Cyprian, priesthood is reserved to priests and bishops, other christians are not ministers of God.

Ignace of Antioch (35-107 B.C) Clement of Rome (deceased around 100 B.C) and Cyprian of Carthage, are the first three men in the history of the Church, to introduce in christianity, the babylonian vision of leaders, who alone can reach heaven.

They've made a profession out of the pastoral function. Cyprian of Carthage, in his letter to people of Furni (Tunisia) would say : « No man that wars for God entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please Him to whom he has pledged himself. As this is said of all men, how much rather ought those not to be bound by worldly anxieties and involvements, who, being busied with divine and spiritual things, are not able to withdraw from the Church, and to have leisure for earthly and secular doings! The form of which ordination and engagement the Levites formerly observed under the law, so that when the eleven tribes divided the land and shared the possessions, the Levitical tribe, which was left free for the temple and the altar, and for the divine ministries, received nothing from that portion of the division;

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but while others cultivated the soil, that portion only cultivated the favour of God, and received the tithes from the eleven tribes, for their food and maintenance, from the fruits which grew. All which was done by divine authority and arrangement, so that they who waited on divine services might in no

respect be called away, nor be compelled to consider or to transact secular business. Which plan and rule is now maintained in respect of the clergy, that they who are promoted by clerical ordination in the Church of the Lord may be called off in no respect from the divine administration, nor be tied down by worldly anxieties and matters; but in the honour of the brethren who contribute, receiving as it were tenths of the fruits, they may not withdraw from the altars and sacrifices, but may serve day and night in heavenly and spiritual things».

That's how he introduced the practice of tithing to pay the clergy, just as the Jews under the law, would pay the Levites.

From that point on, priesthood became a clergy matter, while other christians were relegated to the second rank.

However, according to the Bible, all christians are ministers of God and must exercise their gifts, to build each other up.

«But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light: »  
(1 Peter 2:9 KJV)

c) The bicephalous leadership : a babylonian heresy

For some years now, a new model of stewardship in the church has been imposed to christianity. This model, coming straight to us from the United States, has no scriptural basis.

It is what we refer to as the bicephalous leadership, in other words, the leadership of the church by the «pastoral couple», aka the pastor and his wife, whom he ordained pastor though she has not been called of the Lord to ministry.

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These people often refer to the ministry of Aquila and Priscilla to justify their ambition, thirst for power and domination.

Let's study the ministry of pastoral couples to see if there is a biblical basis for this imposture.

Aquila and Priscilla were in a way Paul's co-workers, they were all tent makers, as the following passage of scriptures states.

« After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth; And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome;) and came unto them. And because he was of the same

craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers»  
(Acts 18:1-3 KJV).

According to this passage, Aquila and Priscilla, his wife, had a job and did not depend on Christians for their livelihood. They did not receive offerings nor tithes from believers.

According to

Acts 18:24-26, this couple was used of God to preach the Gospel, with clarity, to Apollos. They both worked

on a team for the advancement of the

kingdom and the training of saints, and this

earned them the respect and approbation of the apostle Paul himself : «Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus: Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Salute my wellbeloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ»

(Romans 16:3-5 KJV).

They were the apostle Paul's collaborators who had exposed their lives to help him in his work. They had opened their home to

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house a local church, as Gaius and other people had (Romans 16:23).

Aquila and Priscilla had harbored in their house in Rome, a church (Acts 16:3-4) but, just as all the Jews of their time, they were later chased out of town by the emperor Claudius in 49 (Acts 18:1-3). Despite that, this church kept on existing because they did not manage it and because the Christians they trained were fully independent.

In 2 Timothy 4:19, Paul who was jailed in Rome, salutes

Aquila and Priscilla who were missionaries with Timothy. It is obvious

that this couple did not reign as masters in the local church but traveled the nations to train saints. They clearly understood that there was a difference between the local church and ministry.

Ministry is service to the Lord, the saints and the world. It is an individual calling.

It is necessary to realize that just because one is called to ministry, does not necessarily imply that he should start a church. Therefore, it is absolutely biblical that people collaborate, especially couples, to work on the mission field. In this particular case, the diverse gifts that they have received from the Lord are leveraged for the advancement of the work of God.

A couple might start a local church as long as they made sure an apostolic functioning was in place, just

as Aquila and Priscilla had done for the church of Rome. The local church is an entity supposed to be led by a college of elders, in agreement with all the saints exercising their gifts and according to 1Peter 4:10 ; Romans 12:3-8 and 1 Corinthians 12 and 14.

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Aquila and Priscilla were thus, very distant from the bicephalous system, which is seen nowadays in many assemblies. They were mere missionaries, working on a team from one town to another (Rome, Corinth, Rome again and elsewhere). We could search the New Testament high and low and never find a local church led by a ( pastoral ) couple.

The bicephalous leadership has been put in place by american ministries. Later, many african and european pastors started following this unbiblical model. The bicephalous leadership transforms christians into childish and dependent beings.

The pastor is considered to be the dad, his wife, the mom and christians remain children for a lifetime.

These men, true idols in «their» churches, which they manage as businesses, have, long ago, abandoned the faith, calling upon worldly methods to maintain their hold on saints.

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1) PASTOR OR SUPERSTAR ?

Let me point out that no disciple of Jesus - Christ called a man: «my pastor». Simply put, when asked who their pastor was, they would answer «Yeshoua» ! In our time, things have changed. Thousand of christians are so proud of their pastors that they put them on the same pedestal as the Lord. This phenomenon of turning «men of God» into superstars, started with american televangelists.

From that point on, the pastor became a product of marketing, needing to please people in order to sell. The pastor always dresses for success, with perfect hair, tanned skin for whites and lightened skin for blacks. Some have even undergone plastic surgery to change their physical appearance. Victims of fashion and of the world in general, many pride themselves in only wearing high end designer clothing, as if it were an outward sign of spirituality. As any superstar would have it, they draw crowds of hysterical groupies offering themselves to them body and soul, and numerous are those who cannot resist this offer.

Some have even made a magnificent event out of their birthdays, spending huge amounts of money, and where they

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mobilize choirs, composing songs to their own glory for the occasion. In addition to the tithes and offerings they take from the people, they keep on enriching themselves by selling products bearing their image such as pins, handkerchiefs, fabrics, business cards, t-shirts, autographed photos, posters, video clips to their own glory and other fetish causing the misery of their idolators.

The only people on the planet able to compete with them are communist dictators, hungry for a personality cult.

Their megalomania is even mocked by unbelievers. How sad!

Biblically speaking, the pastoral function, as any other, implied simplicity, humility, the gift and denying of self, that the Lord himself has modeled for us.

« Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:» (Philippians 2:5, 6 KJV)

## 2) CHURCH OR SMALL BUSINESS ENTERPRISE? MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING FOR THE SAKE OF MONEY

We are saddened by the current state of most so-called christian churches. Just as the temple of Jerusalem got transformed into big SBE (Small Business Enterprise), many pastors have turned their churches into true enterprises, using worldly business techniques. They pollute minds with attractive

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commercials (large posters, photographs, Websites...) causing covetousness and idolatry in believers. In fact, according to John 16:7-8, the role of the Holy Spirit consists of convincing the world of sin, judgement and justice but unfortunately, these have been replaced by management and marketing.

According to the Larousse Dictionary, MANAGEMENT is a set of techniques concerning the direction, the organization and the administration of a business.

Management or administration encompasses resources, organizational techniques that are put into action for the operation of an entity, such as the art of causing men to obtain a satisfactory performance. In order to optimize efficiency, it tends to respect the interests and representations of all parties involved.

The verb «manage» comes from the italian word «maneggiare» (to control, handle, to have in hand, from the latin word «manus»: hand) from which the french word «manège» (merry-go-round) is derived (spinning horses on a merry-go-round).

To this notion, we should also add the notion of «managing» (of which the XVIth century meaning was to care for one's belongings, one's fortune carefully, in other words, managing domestic affairs) which consists in managing both human and financial resources (the butler «chief of the house» would manage both the staff and the resources; for example, ensuring the pantry had all the necessary grocery items in it).

We should also add to the origins of the word management, the notion of care, as it is only easy to manage both teams and resources by

taking care of them. Who wants to travel far, readies his saddle...

Management's goal is that of facilitating many functions:

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- Technical : many techniques are needed to draw new members. That's why, in numerous churches, every christian

has a mentor, who in turn is under another one, and so on...

In some churches, they even put in place groups of twelve, each headed by a leader.

Once more, the goal here is the numeric growth of the church rather than the spiritual growth of believers.

As a result, techniques on how to approach people are often taught to attract new members (wearing of uniforms, memorized sermons, etc ). There is no room left for the Spirit of God, everything is well established, coordinated and controlled by men.

- Commercial ( marketing and sale) :

people are particularly trained to sell all the derived products of the church-enterprise.

- Finance and accounting : tithes, offerings, fundraisers

are common ground in these churches.

-Security : there's often a team of «bodyguards»

solely trained for the protection of the pastor-entrepreneur. The latter is out of reach, if not hard to approach, without first making an appointment in order to get through security. It is so difficult to get in touch with some pastors, that one might need to wait several months before getting to meet with them.

- Administrative : the pastor-entrepreneur does more often than none, focus on numbers rather than prayer and

the word of God.

Pastors increasingly use marketing techniques to lead their churches, as if they were real businesses.

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All these techniques do, of course, go against the word of God.

The Bible is no longer the only source when it comes to faith and doctrine.

Therefore, specialized books from the business world, politics, sports, religion and also the army are used for the training of leaders. Although, the authors of these books often teach in secular enterprises, they are admired by thousands of pastors who don't seem to mind their teaching such as: the 17 infallible laws to succeed in teams or 21 irrefutable laws of leadership.

They are taught on how to be efficient, how to fulfill the vision, how to achieve numerical growth, etc...

In conclusion, they are taught all kinds of things, except on the knowledge of the Lord, who is totally excluded from their projects.

Thus, they forget what the Bible says: «Through God we shall do valiantly: for he it is that shall tread down our enemies.»(Psalms 60:12 KJV)

According to the Larousse dictionary, MARKETING is a word derived from the english word «market», it refers to techniques of commercialization.

It encompasses the totality of actions having the purpose of knowing, forecasting and eventually stimulating the needs of the consumers for goods and services and to adapt the production and commercialization for catering to needs.

Marketing is also a business service responsible for that activity.

Marketing (often translated «mercatique» in French) is a discipline of management looking to determine offers of goods, services or ideas based on attitudes and motivations of consumers, of the public or society, in general.

Marketing was born in reaction to a classic economical thought which, during the 19th century, was unable to resolve

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problems created by the rapid growth of the economy.

The first notions appear in the 17th century and 18th century, in France and in the United Kingdom. The history of marketing is visible in the history of management and is a recent discipline characterized by the environment and the specific needs of the 20th century. The crisis of 1929 has particularly affected this period by the intensity of the competition, which resulted from it.

The concept of marketing was born between 1944 and 1957

from the idea of wanting to place the consumer at the center of the business model.

The marketing strategy aims at putting the business, meaning the church of «the man of God», in line with the implicit or explicit requirements of the targeted market.

The techniques of marketing are founded on the behavioral study of the christian consumer.

The fundamentals of the marketing strategy are to discover the needs of the potential consumers and to define products and services.

Communication, advertising, promotion and the organization of products' sales, are only the most visible aspect of marketing to the general public.

Operational marketing is divided into four principal fields known as the marketing mix.

-The product : it is here question of Jesus-Christ. For many pastors, Jesus-Christ, our Lord, is a product needing to be sold at all cost. That is particularly true during Christmas, when the product itself is no longer sufficient.

The following elements are included : the packaging (appearance), assembly, the design, the respected norms, labels, the logo (denomination), the life cycle of the product, the product line...

Images of Jesus-Christ, coffee mugs, handkerchiefs, crosses, paintings, anointing oil, water

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from the river Jordan, healing miracles, bible training, those are all derivatives of the product Jesus.

-The price : almost everything comes with a price tag (Bible schools, seminaries, prayers, etc.). One almost needs to be rich to attend some churches today, because the services are so expensive.

What a shift from the will of the Lord, who asks that we preach the gospel free of charge (Matthew 10:4-8) !

-Distribution : there is a well organized network for the distribution of products.

-Advertising : the promotion of the ministry through websites, photos, advertising panels and other supports, because they are absolutely necessary in the sale process. We all understand that the best way to get the attention of potential customers is through advertisement. That's why, it is increasingly common for church enterprises, the american way, to use psychological pressure and nagging to sell their products.

The principal goal of advertising messages is, first and foremost, that of creating unnecessary needs which will then, become essential.

The church enterprise is the first goal of the advertising message.

To attract customers, it uses superlatives:

«great», «bishop», «miracles», «impact», «money». Churches also resort to huge advertising panels to the glory of speakers , impeccably dressed and made up.

For fear of chasing potential buyers away, it has suppressed words, such as: «hell», «repentance», «sin», as well as «end time judgement». Clients have to be put at ease,

pampered and have their every need catered to, otherwise they will not invest in the SBE ( Small Business Enterprise).

Please note that the goal of marketing is that of discovering the needs of the consumer and meeting them.

The Bible says :«For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to

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themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.»

(2 Timothy 4:3, 4 KJV)

This makes perfect sense : because thousands of christians have itching ears and turn to fables, many pastors use marketing to discover their desires and meet them. That's they put more stress on means used to take money away from the flock they lead, than they do on the very kingdom of God. They are ready for all kinds of compromises to answer the pressing needs of believers, who are huge and greedy consumers of the pastoral sermon, and in which, the latter have been investing all their possessions.

As we've just seen, «marketing» comes from the in English word market. However, the Church of the Lord has nothing to do with the market, it is the gathering of saints. The same way that the temple of God had become a tavern of thieves, many pastors have changed their churches into real shops, in which to sell their ideas.

« And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem, And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting; And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise. And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up. » (John 2:13-17 KJV).

## 3) MAMMON : THE ONLY GOD OF THE SBE CHURCH

«Mammon» means «wealth». According to the Lord Jesus-Christ, Mammon is the master of a category of people,

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claiming to serve God. Worries for what to eat, drink, wear and tomorrow, are signs of rulership by this spirit.

« No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof »  
(Matthew 6:24-34 KJV).

« And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced

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themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness» (1 Timothy 6:8-11 KJV).

The apostles were surprised when the Lord told them that it was easier for a camel to through a needle, than to a rich man to enter the kingdom of God (Mark

10:23-27). Indeed, according to Deuteronomy 28, material wealth was a sign of divine blessing. However, under grace, true wealth is spiritual. The Lord wants his children, especially those in full time ministry, to have faith in Him.

#### a) The doctrine of Balaam

To better understand the love of money that some pastors have, we need to depict the apostasy that took place in the church of Pergamos, and that will help us better understand the dramatic consequences of blending.

«But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.»

(Revelation 2:14 KJV)

Balaam means «he who devours». The New Testament reveals a progression in the level of culpability that Balaam experienced. First of all, he attempted to change divine will, while being sneaky, by wanting to say yes, while God had said no. He, thus, paved a way for all the truth critics who, to this day, misinterpret the decrees of Almighty God. This is called the way of Balaam.

Later, the «soothsayer» went «looking for enchantments» and called upon demonic powers to inhibit the

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conquering walk of Israel. He willingly subjected himself to evil spirits, which was something the Lord had categorically forbidden. The scriptures refer to this as the going astray of Balaam.

In a moment of despair, the soothsayer resorted to the ploy, mentioned in the passage of Revelation 2:14 as

the teaching or doctrine of Balaam. It appears as if, in his treacherous advice to Balak, king of Moab, the false prophet had offered : «Given the fact that you won't be able to overcome Israel through the occult, try destroying it from within. In battles, Israel prevails because his God protects him. But if it disobeys the moral precepts of his God, it would immediately face his judgement ; as a result, there would be a greater number of victims than on the battlefield». King Balak organized a feast, during which the young women of Moab were sent to lure young Israelites by inviting them to both their festivities and their sacrifices.

« And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods. And Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor: and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel»

(Numbers 25:1-3 KJV).

Thus Israel was led to offer sacrifices to demons.

This became the stumbling stone that caused Israel to stagger under the Old Covenant, and which still causes the people of God to stagger so often, under the New Covenant.

The plague of Baal-Peor was devastating because it caused 24,000 deaths. But the one mentioned in the letter to the church of Pergamos was even deadlier : numerous lives having made a profession of faith have been seduced by spiritual debauchery, neutralized by mixture with the unholy and paralyzed by compromise. These souls have had and will keep on having their hearts hardened. As for Balaam, his going astray did not benefit him at all, to the contrary, he got smitten by the israelites (Joshua 13:22).

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b) Simonism

Simonism is a doctrine based on Mammon, the god of money. Simon, the magician offered money to Peter for the power of the Spirit (Acts 8:18-24). Likewise

, many christian leaders ask their church members for money, in exchange for their prayers. To achieve this, they make up all kinds of offerings the Bible never mentions, such as : the offering of the prophet, the ram, the lamb, the goat or better yet an offering to build an altar.

For example, I recall the story of this lady who told me that she was asked for a large sum of money by a couple of pastors after telling them about her spiritual troubles. This large sum of money was to be used to build an altar to help her retrieve her spiritual gifts. A brother in Christ also told me that in his church, before one can go through deliverance, a sum of 300 Euros had to first be paid! How sad is it to see men and women, seeking the Lord whole heartedly, be taken advantage of by these crooks!

Other leaders stand before the people to receive tithes from them and to lay hands on every giver. Once the money is collected, they then leave with their spoil, claiming that as priests, this money is rightfully their own. They just forget that priests in the Old Covenant received the tenth of the tithe due to Levites and not the tithe of the people (Numbers 1:25-31).

Numerous church leaders destroy their ministries because of Mammon.

«No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold

to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon»(Matthew 6:24 KJV).

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Unfortunately, these men would rather serve Mammon than God, and use their talents to get rich at christians' expense. Just as Judas betrayed Jesus due to his cupidity, likewise, these men betray the truth because of their love for money. A few pastors with whom I've shared the message about the tithe no longer being relevant under the New Covenant, have admitted the veracity of it, but still won't teach it in their own churches saying: «people have to be kept under the law and in ignorance» ! Some won't do it for fear of not being able to make ends meet, regardless of the fact that this teaching is, in fact, causing christians to give even more to the work of God. «For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows» (1 Timothy 6:10 KJV)

Over the years, I've had the opportunity to talk to several people concerning this type of problems, particularly concerning tithes.

I have been told that pastors make their sheep pay the tithes, going as far as threatening them, claiming that if they didn't do so, they would no longer be allowed to minister in church.

Others hold church giving records, or generously give out envelopes, on which the first name and last name of the giver would be printed. This technique allows them to control believers in church and all the while ensuring that the preachers' pockets get filled. Christians who have gone through these types of experiences often are bitter and remain under condemnation.

This way of doing things is simply unbiblical. These leaders willingly choose to forget what Matthew 6:1, 3-4 reminds us of: «Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven (...)

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But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly».

Nowadays, it is not uncommon to see so-called servants of God teaching this doctrine of Balaam. Please understand that its success does not, and will never, change the fact that it remains an abomination in the sight of God.

In fact, asking people for money in exchange for prayer is unbiblical, for it is written: «...freely ye have received, freely give» (Matthew 10:8 KJV)!

Likewise, the sale of handkerchiefs belonging to preachers (practice observed in the United States), should not be tolerated. Jesus alone heals, so no handkerchief would have such power.

Let us remember, that the healing of the sick who came into contact with cloths that Paul had touched, remain an isolated occurrence

(Acts 19:11-12) and besides, they were by no means sold.

Paul did not make a doctrine out of it either. God used this type of healing at a given point in time.

When christians agree to this, they no longer trust God and start revering men and objects. This is plain and simple idolatry!

Rather than talking about sin, the doctrine of Balaam

puts Mammon at the forefront. And just as

Balaam was seduced, many men of God in Africa, who are around presidents, are easily corrupted to the point that they no longer preach the truth to the people holding high offices, for the love of honors, titles and applause.

## 4) THE SPIRIT OF CONTROL AND MANIPULATION

Here is the excerpt of a document that was transmitted to us and which sheds some light over the spirit of control that governs a lot of churches. This

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is nothing short of witchcraft. This is a charter, or better yet a pact, that members of that church have to sign. No need to comment on that...

«I commit to being faithful and loyal to the man of God according to the criteria set by him, I commit to following and serving the vision that God gave him and to work towards its accomplishment.

I commit to supporting and serving the pastor of the church and other church leaders in all things for better or worse, through conflicts, difficulties, persecution, etc....

I commit to serving the interests and the vision of Church C. and to not doing anything for my personal interests.

I commit to being totally and exclusively dedicated to vision of Church C. and that of all his ministries, with all my heart, all my soul, all my thoughts and all my strength. I commit to not participating nor starting any work outside of Church C.

I commit to not working for any other church, association or christian group outside the activities of Church C.

I commit to faithfully representing the spirit and the message of Church C.

I commit to not taking part nor participating in any other meetings or christian church gatherings outside of Church C.

I commit to honoring, respecting and following the directions given by my leaders (...). I commit to following them without resistance, rebellion nor contradiction.

I commit to investing myself for the long run. I declare that I have no other plans nor goals for my life other than working towards the accomplishment of the vision of Church C.

I commit to being head of department of Church C. for a long period, or until I die.

I commit to taking my vacations and to organizing my time according to the needs of the church and to following its priorities, and modus operandi.

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I commit to being present to all church meetings (...).

I commit to not missing no more than two consecutive sundays, and to being at church for Easter, christmas and New year».

Behind this type of contract, one could easily perceive the spirit of nicolaism.

### a) Nicolaism

During the fourth century B.C, bishops took over the temporal power. Abusing their ecclesiastic functions, they excercised a despotic authority that, for over sixteen centuries, never ceased to destroy relations between nations.

In addition,

mysterious practices of babylonian magi

,who were established in Pergamos, progressively took over the whole christianity.

In fact, ever since the fourth century, numerous elements, foreign to believers, have been incorporated, with subtlety, to traditional cults, that wrongly boasted of being evangelical.

This spirit has been able to infiltrate several churches as the spirit of nicolaitans or Nicolaism. The pastor-entrepreneur, wanting to have control over everything, ends up being possessed by this spirit.

«Nicolaitan» means «he who dominates». Some church fathers thought it referred to the disciples of Antioch, one of the seven deacons of the early church.

For Irenaeus

bishop of Lyon (second century B.C), nicolaitans were gnostics. Around that same time, Tertullian, bishop of

Carthage (160-240 B.C) accused the nicolaitans of preaching lust, though he did not seem to have direct knowledge of their doctrine. They were content as long as they drew closer to cainites, who

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preached a redeemer God as opposed to the creator God, and recreated the person of Cain, that they considered persecuted by God.

Clement of Alexandria (150-220 B.C) bishop of

Alexandria) described the Nicolaitans as

« lascivious goats»

followers of the pooling of women. He told the story of

Nicolas who was married to a very beautiful woman, of which he was extremely jealous. As the apostles confronted him about it,

Nicolas took his wife in front of the community and offered her to whoever wanted her. Clement also pointed out that afterwards, Nicolas started leading an ascetic life together with his children.

Nicolaitans are thus in error when they explain his maxim «we should misuse the flesh» as an incitation to debauchery, rather than to asceticism.

Another interpretation explains the word «Nicolaitan»

from the greek «nikao» : master et «laos» : people,

which literally means : «conqueror or master of the

people». Christians are increasingly becoming the victims of some pastors, animated by the spirit of nicolaitans, who believe they had the right to do what they pleased. These so-called men of God manipulate christians and spoil them financially. They believe that ministry bestows a position (while the Bible says it is , rather, a function) giving them the right to behave as Heads of businesses and to put a yoke on the people of God.

In fact the doctrine of Nicolaitans is based on domination, manipulation, death threats and curses to everyone refusing to submit to the will of the pastor-entrepreneur. This doctrine has dug a hole between leaders

(apostles, prophets, teachers, pastors and evangelists) and the

people. This is an abomination.

The Apostle Peter would actually warn elders who led the people of God, against these very practices.

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«The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock» (1 Peter 5:1-3 KJV).

This doctrine is responsible for a erroneous understanding of ministry, it creates a real gap between leaders

(pastors, prophets, teachers, evangelists, apostles) and believers. The persistence of the concept of a separated priesthood has been essential in the defense of a hierarchical structure in many churches. As we have previously discussed, the word «hierarchical» comes from the greek work «hierus», which means priest. If the idea of a separated priesthood were done away with, it would fundamentally change the hierarchical structures of a number of churches, relying exclusively on earthly authority.

Surprisingly enough, some churches profess their belief in the priesthood of all believers, all the while also believing in an exclusive priesthood.

These two concepts are diametrically opposed, this type of statement is purely theoretic and not at all practical.

In reality, many pastors make the distinction between «simple christians» (brothers and sisters from church) and ministers of the Word. This distinction constitutes an unbiblical stand for the Church, and shows a superiority complex on the part of pastors. To the contrary, the New Testament teaches that all christians, including apostles, pastors, etc...are brothers and sisters in Christ.

Because many churches give a professional status to the clergy, this practice makes a profession out of the religious service.

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Therefore, the «professionals of religion» are opposed to «laity».

Nicolaitans consider themselves superior to others, they claim to have monopoly over the Word, the anointing and spiritual gifts. However, the Bible teaches that all Christians are ministers and equal in the sight of God.

A huge number of churches are powerless because of this doctrine, centralizing everything in a man, who alone has the right to preach, baptize, celebrate weddings, bury the dead, pray for the sick, practice deliverance, etc...

As a result, Christians did entirely cast their burdens unto their pastors, forsaking the use of spiritual gifts or talents given to them by God. It is unbiblical for a pastor to be the only one allowed to preach the Word of God in the gathering of the saints, because we should each put our God-given gifts to work for the service of others (1 Peter 4:10).

b) Can one lose their salvation for leaving the local church ?

Thousands of Christians would love to leave the religious system in which they are imprisoned, but cannot get themselves to do so, for fear of being either cursed or losing their salvation.

In fact,

many pastors, real heads of SBE (Small Business Enterprise), say that one risks losing their salvation if they leave their church.

Besides, they make no apology condemning Christians who have the nerve of leaving them.

According to them, children of God are supposed to benefit from their spiritual covering to receive protection from outside dangers.

Therefore, leaving a religious organization, a denomination or a local assembly is synonymous of damnation!

Cyprian of Carthage is once more the author of this heresy, as confirmed in his letter concerning the unity of

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the church. «Such a one is to be turned away from and avoided, whosoever he may be, that is separated from the Church. Such a one is perverted and sins, and is condemned of his own self. Does he think that he has Christ, who acts in opposition to Christ's priests, who separates himself from the company of His clergy and people? He bears arms against the Church, he contends against God's appointment. An enemy of the altar, a rebel against Christ's sacrifice, for the faith faithless, for religion profane, a

disobedient servant, an impious son, a hostile brother, despising the bishops, and forsaking God's priests, he dares to set up another altar, to make another prayer with unauthorized words, to profane the truth of the Lord's offering by false sacrifices, and not to know that he who strives against the appointment of God, is punished on account of the daring of his temerity by divine visitation. Thus Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, who endeavoured to claim to themselves the power of sacrificing in opposition to Moses and Aaron the priest, underwent immediate punishment for their attempts.».

Some pastors revert to the same type of intimidation using Hebrews 10:25 to hold christians captive in their Babylonian system :«Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching»  
(Hebrews 10:25 KJV)

By studying closely this passage, we notice that its author never forbids christians to leave a pagan assembly where sin is tolerated, but rather asks that we not forsake brotherly fellowship because it is essential to our spiritual growth, as stated in verse 24 : «And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: »  
(Hebrews 10:24 KJV)

A christian can thus leave a local assembly due to sin and join another, where Christ is truly exalted. In fact, 2 Corinthians 6:14-18 tells us clearly that there is no fellowship between light and darkness.

According to Hebrews 10:24, church gatherings'goal is to cause christians to love God, hear sound doctrine and have good works (Ephesians 2:10 ; Revelations 19:7-8).

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If a local assembly does not encourage you to walk in love, truth and good works ( holiness, fear of God, justice...), you can leave it. Church meetings were established for christians to perfect one another, and not so they would get worse.

«Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse »  
(1 Corinthians 11:17 KJV)

If just like many others, you have left your local church due to the presence of sin, don't forsake brotherly fellowship even though you might have gotten disappointed in the past, for we are part of a body made of many members.  
Pray, so that God will lead you to brothers and sisters living in holiness, with whom you could share the Word.  
(1 Corinthians 12)

In the same line of thought, many pastors won't acknowledge the people that God has called for his

work. As pharisees, they won't listen to those who are not coming from their theological schools, meaning out of their religious mold.

As soon as they meet a young minister raised up by God, they ask him the following questions : «What school do you come from ? Who ordained you into ministry?».

Cyprian of Carthage said the same thing,during the third century B.C, about the people the Lord had raised up to admonish the church about its laity.

«These heads of cults place themselves and this without divine order, over their fellow citizens; they take the power without worrying about the ordination that confers it; they take on the title of bishops, without anyone giving them the episcopate».

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For Cyprian of Carthage and his present day followers, it is ordination (a practice totally foreign to the New Testament) that gives the pastor the authority needed to work in ministry. According to them, one needs to be sponsored by a renown ministry from the religious world to have both an impact and a certain level of consideration. (John 5:44).

#### c) Pyramidal home cells

All means are acceptable, as long as they allow the servitude of the children of God with an iron rod. So, to control christians, pastors increasingly revert to home cells over which, they place leaders, in turn under more leaders, and who themselves, are under pastoral control.

These home cells depend upon the «mother church» and all have to preach the same message, which had been prepared in advance by the leading clergy. In those circumstances, the freedom of the Spirit, supposed to be at work in home cells, is sacrificed at the profit of the logic of figures for the mother church.

These home cells don't have the right to meet on sundays and all offerings are perceived for the benefit of the mother church.

The members of these cells are treated as merchandise, they are simple numbers, generally listed and recorded (Family name, first name, address, profession, family situation, etc.). It is not uncommon for these cell leaders to be under moral pressure as they are required to produce numbers, by making followers, rather than training disciples.

There is more stress put on quantity rather than quality. They have the obligation of instilling into members the vision of the mother church, or better yet that of the pastor, who is only accessible through intermediaries, often referred to as «mentors».

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CHAPITRE 3

## THE PASTORAL FUNCTION IN THE LIGHT OF SCRIPTURES

To better understand the pastoral function, we must study the Pastor of all pastors, Jesus, the Messiah. Every pastoral ministry needs to reflect the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus, doing so, would allow us to better understand what the Lord expects of each pastor.

### 1) THE BIBLICAL PASTORAL FUNCTION

#### a) Jesus, the good shepherd

« For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls»  
(1 Peter 2:25 KJV) .

In this passage, Jesus the Messiah is presented as the rightful Pastor and Guardian (from the greek episcopos : overseer, bishop) of our souls. The Lord watches over our souls day and night. It is under his spiritual covering that we should remain and not that of a man.

In chapter 10 of the book of John, The Lord Jesus defines Himself as the Good Shepherd, of whom it is also question in Psalm 23 :

« Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.

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But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth

forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers. This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them. Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.

All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd »(John 10:1-16 KJV).

In the light of this passage, we can define the pastoral function as following :

- The pastor gives his life for others : «Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many» (Matthew 20:28 KJV).  
How many pastors are able to give

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their lives for brothers and sisters in the faith, in this day and age? Most of them already have a hard time, as it is, sharing their belongings with their collaborators.

The true pastoral function consists of serving brothers and sisters and not the opposite.

A true pastor serves others and does not enjoy being served as a king. He does not tell others to do things, but instead leads by example.

- The pastor knows his sheep : the shepherd has a personal relationship with each sheep. This relationship is not professional, but rather familial and friendly.

- The pastor feeds the sheep : The Lord took care of each and every sheep. He fed them when they were hungry. The good shepherd seeks, first and foremost, to find pasture for his sheep, contrary to what we see today, as more and more shepherds are pressuring the sheep for food (John 6).

- The pastor defends his sheep against ravaging wolves

(John 18 :8-9), a good shepherd is always ready to die to protect the sheep he is in charge of.

- The pastor feeds the sheep : « Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God unto the shepherds; Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks?»

(Ezekiel 34:2 KJV).

« Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God unto the shepherds; Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them.

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And they were scattered, because there is no shepherd: and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered.

My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them. Therefore, ye shepherds, hear the word of the Lord ; As I live, saith the Lord God , surely because my flock became a prey, and my flock became meat to every beast of the field, because there was no shepherd, neither did my shepherds search for my flock, but the shepherds fed themselves, and fed not my flock; Therefore, O ye shepherds, hear the word of the Lord ; Thus saith the Lord God ; Behold, I am against the shepherds; and I will require my flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; for I will deliver my flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them» (Ezekiel 34:1-10 KJV).

In this passage, God rebukes bad pastors severely, he points out several types of sheep : the wounded, the sick, the lost and the weak (Ezekiel 34:4). The pastor-entrepreneur does not care about the spiritual state of the sheep, though this should have been his greatest concern. It is important to note that it is pastors that should be responsible for getting pasture (or food) for the sheep. (Psalms 23). But lately, it is shepherds who are trying to get fattened by and off the sheep. They'd better pay attention to Ezekiel 34 which denounces the pastor requiring a salary at all costs.

b) The pastor is one of ministries of Ephesians 4

The New Testament mentions the fivefold ministries given by God to edify and equip the body of

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Christ. They have been established to lead the people of God and are listed in the epistle of Paul to the Ephesians.

In Ephesians 4:11, it is question of the five fold ministerial gifts established by Christ to help newborn believers in the Lord to serve in local churches. These ministries must be trained to equip the saints so that they will, in turn, be able to answer the calling of God on their own lives. The role of these ministries is to encourage them in their exercise of spiritual gifts (Romans

1: 11 and 2 Timothy 1: 6), to bring them biblical knowledge

(Galatians 4:19) and to recognize their respective callings

(Titus 1: 5). We must keep in mind that all christians are called to receive pastoral care (1 Corinthians 12:25). The pastoral function is that of equipping the saints among other things. The pastor is not a professional,

with a degree in theology, receiving a salary every month and who will end up retiring some day.

This function should not be confused with a professional career, for it is a calling from God.

Unfortunately, that's the case in a lot of churches. For that reason, many pastors prevent christians from advancing in their calling, for fear of competition and the cares tomorrow may bring.

«He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and

teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: »

(Ephesians 4:10-12 KJV)

The greek word translated «perfecting», as

found in Ephesians 4:12, is «katartismos» which means

«to repair the damage caused by sin in the hearts of new

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believers», «to prepare and equip»,

or better yet «complement in furniture, equipment in

knowledge». Unfortunately, the pastoral function, as presented to us these days, does not allow

christians to perfect themselves, but rather chokes them, inhibits them, keeps them immature and

totally dependent on a man.

As a result, there is no room for the evangelization of nations, due to internal wars between brethren in churches and the competition for titles.

The greek word «kartartizô» in Ephesians 4:12 comes from the root word «arô» which means «joining together, to unite». The adjective «artios» means «that which is complete, united, perfect». The verb «katartizô» is used in the New Testament as «to mend», «put in order, render complete or perfect» (Luke 6:40 ; 2 Corinthians 13:11), «to prepare, make ready for service» (Hebrews 13:21). It corresponds to the concept of fine tuning or setting up of a machine.

Hugedé compares it to the delicate work of a specialist to whom is given non-working assembled machinery ; his job consists of making it work to the fullest of its capabilities. He sees a verb of workmanship, which implies the notion of efficiency. In the secular greek world, this word was used by medical doctors to discuss the reduction of a dislocation or the equipment of a fracture. The idea is to allow christians to fulfill their role within the Body, to render them capable of using the spiritual gift or gifts that they each received for an action («eis ergon» : a job) related to ministry. («diakonias»).

«And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them» (Matthew 4:21 KJV)

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In this verse, the verb to repair is also «kartartizô».

Notice that the nets were repaired to be used anew and not to be locked up, or thrown somewhere. The same word is used to discuss the perfecting of the saints by the fivefold ministries of Ephesians 4. Just as nets

were fixed to be reused, christians need to be put back together, healed, corrected, and equipped so they could be used of the Lord.

It is therefore out of the question that they be locked up inside a building.

The fivefold ministries of Ephesians work as mechanics repairing wrecked or broken down vehicles, so they might be useful again.

The true apostles,

prophets, evangelists, doctors, and pastors should not be content seeing motionless christians, seating

on pews without knowing their respective calling and ministries.

They ought to contribute to the edification of the body of Christ. «To edify» comes from the greek «oikodome», which means the «action of one encouraging growth in christian wisdom, piety, holiness, etc.» (1 Peter 2:4-6 ; Ephesians 2:20-22). To edify means to build.

Unfortunately, rather than building, a lot of church leaders are causing divisions.

Acting as if their own blood was shed at the cross, they destroy with carelessness the work which Christ shed his precious blood for. (Acts 20:28). They break apart churches to create new ones. They will someday have to give an account to God for all that.

God wants christians to achieve:

- The unity of faith. Faith has to be solely based on the person of Jesus-Christ. It is through He alone that we have access to salvation (Romans 10:9-10 ; Acts 4:12).

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- The knowledge of the Son of God through his Word.

This knowledge needs to be the aim of every child of God.

Paul says in 2 Corinthians 4:5 : «For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake» (2 Corinthians 4:5 KJV).

« Thus saith the Lord , Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord » (Jeremiah 9:23, 24 KJV).

«Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord : his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth» would say the prophet Hosea (Hosea 6:3 KJV).

Lately, many servants of the Lord have been preaching about their own ministry, rather than Christ. Their photography and names are predominant in church buildings, on advertising panels, seminar flyers, concerts, their organization's webpages, their business cards, etc. Nevertheless, God wants us to have an intimate and personal relationship with his Son, so that we would cling to the Lord Jesus-Christ who builds his Church rather than clinging to men (Hosea 4:6 et Hosea 6:3).

- The full stature of man is in the likeness of Christ.

This is the position of the spiritual man (1 Corinthians 2:15) who

is able to discern between good and evil ; he has the mind of God ; he attains the perfect stature of Christ and resembles Him.

The goal here is spiritual maturity, however, many christians are still infants, even after many years since their conversion. Let's clarify that Christ is not a pedophile, who has come looking for a immature church.

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### 2) THE ALTERED PASTORAL FUNCTION

The word pastor comes from the greek «poïmen» which means «shepherd». Therefore, the pastor is a shepherd who cares and feeds the sheep, that had been entrusted to him.

Oddly enough, the most renown ministry of churches coming from reformation, is the pastoral ministry.

However, the word pastor only appears once in the New Testament (Ephesians 4:11), while the apostolic ministry is mentioned more than eighty times!!! Obviously, there is a problem with all these churches functioning with the pastoral vision. On the other hand, we notice that most people aspiring to this function climb the ladder in the following order : deacon, elder, evangelist and finally pastor. As if this function was synonymous of remuneration or promotion !

#### a) The professional pastor

We ought to ask ourselves the following questions: who is currently taking care of the sheep in dormant churches ? Why do we often say that christians are the only army killing its own wounded soldiers ?

The ministry given to the pastor is fundamental for an influential church because it ensures good spiritual health to the saints, and a real help in times of need.

Throughout the Bible, the main purpose of the pastor is that of alleviating believers, «caring» for them in every sense of the word, even though he will require the help of other ministries to fulfill this duty. Why? Simply because it is humanly impossible to take on such a demanding task alone !

«The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them » (Ezekiel 34:4 KJV).

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According to this passage, there are many types of sheep : the weak, the sick, the wounded, the gone astray and the lost.

The pastoral ministry is one of the fivefold ministries of Ephesians 4:11 that God has given to his Church. The pastor needs to care deeply for the Lord's sheep, listen to them, love them, feed them, groom them, strengthen them, bring them back to the right path. He needs to act as an elder within the church.

Your brothers, the pastors, do they care for you or do they rather spoil you (according to Ezekiel 34) ? Are you wandering for lack of a good shepherd? are you fleeced to no end ? Unfortunately, a lot of so-called pastors fleece the sheep, spoil, wound and abuse them.

I can never forget the vision, in which God was telling me that many pastors would, soon after winning souls, bring them before his throne to present them before Him. However, rather than truly offering them up to Him, they considered them as their own personal prize. They act as if these souls belonged to them, and as if they died on cross to save them !

Yes, for their own personal gain, they keep them captive and ignorant. Ezekiel 34 is nevertheless very clear on the fate of these shepherds.

«As I live, saith the Lord God, surely because my flock became a prey, and my flock became meat to every beast of the field, because there was no shepherd, neither did my shepherds search for my flock, but the shepherds fed themselves, and fed not my flock; Therefore, O ye shepherds, hear the word of the Lord; Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I am against the shepherds; and I will require my flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; for I will deliver my flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them.»

Ezekiel 34:8-10 (in the King James Version or Ezekiel 34:27).

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The pastoral ministry needs to be put back in line within the Word, so that saints would benefit from

the care allowing them to grow, become mature, and enter into the calling the Lord has prepared for them.

The pastor is by no mean the mediator between God and the people. The Bible only presents a single mediator between God and men : Jesus-Christ (1 Timothy 2:5).

Let's not forget that in the Bible (Ephesians 4:11), the word «pastor» is plural. This simply means that biblical pastors worked in teams, they were genuine elders taking care of young converts and helped them answer their individual calling.

In numerous cases, not only do pastors refuse to work in teams, but as we've noticed, they would rather «consecrate» their spouses pastors, to ensure full control of the church.

Nevertheless, when we look at scriptures, we realize that at the birth of a church, the latter would be led by the Spirit, who used different people without them necessarily holding any title whatsoever. These saints would simply need to encourage one another and persevere in the teachings of the apostles (Acts 2:40-44). As soon as the church would mature spiritually, the brothers and sisters would designate men, whose fruits were visible, so they could take on the role of either elders or pastors (Acts 14:23 ; Titus 1:5).

God could call a couple to ministry, as it were the case for Aquilas and Priscilla (Acts 18:24-28), however, the direction of a local assembly is reserved for elders or a team of ministerial gifts working together with the rest of the assembly.

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If someone is called to start a church, according to the Bible, the same person must hold an genuine apostolic ministry, including the ability to train his successors, who are called to replace him someday. If he lacks this capability, the church must seek the help of true apostolic ministries, as Philip did (Acts 8:1-25).

Today the level of confusion within the church is simply dramatic. Due to blindness and stubbornness, some servants of the Lord do not operate in the callings, prepared for them by God. But rather, hold on to their offices, refusing to let christians elect a college of elders, to take charge of what they refer to as «their» assembly. Reigning as kings, they take as their own the churches they implanted without truly feeding the sheep. As a result of this confusion, too many christians remain «spirituals babes» all their lives, and unfortunately, spiritual death soon follows.

According to popular belief, the pastor is a religion professional who, after studies in theology, has been consecrated to «holy ministry». That's why , he often single handedly undertakes the burden of his sheep, all the while playing the role of priest, «pater familias» and that of an entrepreneur. One simply needs to consider the following : take a pastor away from his local church for a few days and you'll notice that many christians, even those with tenured christian lives, becoming crippled given their dependence on him. This deviance has been made possible by the separation between laity and clergy, brought about by Roman Catholicism and later mimicked by evangelicals. This apostate religion has also introduced the monarchical episcopate functioning and, unfortunately, churches born out of the protestant reform have adopted it, rather than suppressing it. Besides, the coming of Jesus-Christ has put an end to the secular distinction between priests and laity.

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This cleavage certainly had its place in the old covenant, though no longer relevant since the beginning of the dispensation of grace. No passage of the Bible allows one to say that the direction of an assembly must be the work of a single person, no matter what their title.

Apostolic and early churches were led by teams of ministerial gifts working in the midst of the people and with the people. Besides, the Bible mentions some assemblies that did not have a physical conductor (Acts 14).

The pastor has today become the «foundation» of many churches. Often, the protestant or evangelical pastor is nothing short of a revamped catholic priest. In fact, he practically holds the same office as the latter, fulfilling as part of his everyday preaching, the moral support of all families of the assembly, the distribution of holy communion, performing baptisms, visiting the sick, the widows and orphans, the caring for souls, celebrating marriages, the administration of the church and management of funds.

By becoming both the head and the pedestal of the church, the pastoral function thus loses its true nature. It is not surprising that he fails his mission of therapist. First, because by tradition, he is omnipresent and holds such an overbearing power that he suffocates the priesthood of believers. Second, because he multiplies his chances of suffering from a nervous breakdown or depression.

A brother by the name of Franck A. Viola, conducted an advanced study on this question in the book «Pagan Christianity». In it, he exposes statistics conducted in the United States on pastors.

The below excerpts are very revealing concerning the issue of hyperactive pastors :

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«The contemporary pastor not only does damage to God's people, he does damage to himself. The pastoral office a l'habitude de gaspiller tout ce qui lui tombe entre les mains. La has a way of chewing up, many who come within its parameters. Depression, burnout and emotional breakdown occur at abnormally high rates among pastors. At the time of this writing, there are reportedly more than 500,000 paid pastors serving churches in the United States. Among this massive number of religious professionals, consider the following statistics that testify to the lethal danger of the pastoral office:

94% feel pressured to have an ideal family.

90% work more than forty-six hours a week.

81% say they have insufficient time with their spouses.

80% believe that pastoral ministry affects their family negatively.

70% do not have someone they consider a close friend.

70% have lower self-esteem than when they entered the ministry

50% feel unable to meet the demands of the job.

80% are discouraged or deal with depression.

More than 40% report that they are suffering from burnout, frantic schedules, and unrealistic expectations.

33% percent consider pastoral ministry an outright hazard to the family.

33% have seriously considered leaving their position in the past year.

40% percent of pastoral resignations are due to burnout.

Most pastors are expected to juggle sixteen major tasks at once. And many crumble under the pressure.

For this reason,

1,400 ministers in all denominations across the United States are fired or forced to resign each month.

Over the past twenty years,

the average length of a pastorate has declined from seven years to just over four years !» (Pagan Christianity, 137-138)

These numbers speak volumes, to demonstrate that the pastor does not need to be the principal character in the life of

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believers ! The Church must do away with the traditions and customs acquired over the years, because they corrupt the teachings of the Lord and kill the souls of sheep and pastors alike.

Regardless of these numbers showcasing the limitations, shortcomings and weaknesses of pastors who are mere human beings, some of them want to maintain their hold on the sheep by frightening them with the false doctrine of spiritual covering.

Because some pastors believe they can control or have a monopoly over all fivefold ministries at once, there is pressing need of reforming the deplorable exercise of this function. As a result, the Church will be headed by pastors who truly care for the sheep, as God demands it.

b) Is a pastor both an authority and spiritual covering ?

It is amazing how some pastors' imagination causes them to come up with doctrines, with the sole purpose of maintaining the people of God under their control. One of these doctrines is the spiritual covering doctrine, according to which, every christian must pray to have a shepherd, a guide in a sense, whose role would be to counsel him or her and most of all, protect from Satan.

«Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you » (Hebrews 13:17 KJV).

Here is the verse used by numerous pastors, to frighten christians and to impose their so-called doctrine

of spiritual covering.

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The verb «to watch» in this passage is «agrupneo» in greek which is translated by «to be vigilant», «to not slumber» ; it is question here of spiritual slumber. Pastors must watch over brothers and sisters during church meetings, they must also make sure that christians exercise freely their gifts and ministries, and finally they must watch over their doctrine.

The pastoral ministry gets all its significance during church meetings, and not the opposite. Indeed, pastors cannot watch over christians outside of church gatherings because they are not omnipresent. They can and must, of course, pray for the sheep even at home (Colossians 4:12), but they do not protect them outside of church gatherings.

We, once more, owe the origin of the unbiblical doctrine of the so-called spiritual covering to Ignatus of Antioch (35-107 B.C) and Cyprian of Carthage (200-258 B.C).

Cyprian would teach that the bishop had no other superior but God and for that reason, he only owed an account to God himself. For him, whosoever would separate from the bishop, separates from God. Cyprian also taught that a portion of the sheep of the Lord was granted to a single shepherd (the bishop).

L'évêque était devenu le médiateur entre Dieu et le peuple.

So, the doctrine of the spiritual covering wants every christian to have a spiritual father, acting as a guide responsible for his or her protection. This shepherd is at the same time father, counselor and conductor. He is also an authority to which Christians must submit at all times. Ignatus and Cyprian equated disobeying the shepherd, who according to them was «an authority», to disobeying God himself.

Ignatus of Antioch (35-107 B.C) confirms it in his letter to the Smyrnaeans: « See that you all follow the bishop, even as Jesus-Christ

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does the Father, and the presbytery as you would the apostles; and reverence the deacons, as being the institution of God. Let no man do anything connected with the Church without the bishop. Let that be deemed a proper Eucharist, which is [administered] either by the bishop, or by one to whom he has entrusted it. Wherever the bishop shall appear, there let the multitude [of the people] also be; even as, wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church. It is not lawful without the bishop either to baptize or to celebrate a love-feast; but whatsoever he shall approve of, that is also pleasing to God, so that everything that is done may be secure and valid. Moreover, it is in accordance with reason that we should return to soberness [of conduct], and, while yet we have opportunity, exercise repentance towards God. It is well to reverence both God and the bishop. He who honours the bishop has been honoured by God; he who does anything without the knowledge of the bishop, does [in reality] serve the devil».

As we have seen, the doctrine of spiritual covering, was already taught by Ignatius of Antioch and Cyprian of Carthage.

Much later, during the 70s, the movement known as shepherd-disciple was born in the United States. This movement put back on the scene the teachings of Ignatius of Antioch and Cyprian of Carthage. The promoters of this doctrine taught that the bishop or shepherd had «delegated divine authority» and that his opinion would always need to be followed. They based it on Romans 13 ; 1 Peter 2:13-17 and Titus 3:1, where it talks about the submission of christians to established authorities, these preachers would assert that the shepherd was the «ambassador of God», responsible for communicating the messages of the Lord to the disciples. They equated disobeying the messenger of God, to disobeying God himself.

One of the key verses used by a lot of pastors to make christians respect them and be submissive is Romans 13:1-7.

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« Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.

For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour».

Of course, wolves can come and infiltrate the church during gatherings to destroy the work of God, that's why shepherds need to watch. The pastors who have the audacity of asking christians to be under their spiritual covering to be protected, take the place of the Lord Jesus-Christ.

In fact, Christ alone watch permanently over christians because he is the true pasteur and watchman.

«For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls » (1 Peter 2:25 KJV)

The word «shepherd» in this passage is «poïmen», which is translated in english by shepherd or pastor. The word «guardian» comes from the greek «epyscopos» which means watchman, guardian, bishop. Peter, although responsible for feeding the sheep of the Lord (John 21:15-19), humbly recognized that Jesus-Christ is the rightful Pastor.

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Please remember that no christian in the early church would call a man «my pastor» because the rightful pastor is the Lord Jesus-Christ (John 10:11-16).

Also, Philip, in Acts 8, was translated by the Lord after announcing the Word to the ethiopian eunuch.

One can only wonder why God did not let Philip teach this man the fundamentals of the gospel until he became mature. The answer is simple : Jesus is the pastor and guardian of souls . He knows better than anyone how to care for his sheep. Needless to say that there is no point in jumping over new converts, as it is often the case in many assemblies, to get their contact information in order to follow their christian walk, as Jesus himself takes care of his people.

c) The biblical meaning of the word «covering»

There are in the Bible many hebrew words that speak of covering but for the purpose of our discussion, we'll only mention a couple.

On the one hand «Kacah», which means to cover, to hide, to wrap, to cover up, to clothe, to forgive, to veil.

«Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle » (Exodus 40:34 KJV). In these verse, the word «kakah» is used to talk about the protection and the dressing of the tabernacle. The tabernacle, image of the Church, was covered by the cloud of the Lord and not by a man.

On the other hand «Kaphar», which means atonement, to atone, propitiation, to coat, to appease, redemption, to redeem, to forgive, to impute.

The verb to atone is the translation of the hebrew word «kaphar», which primarily means «to cover».

Thereby, in Genesis 6:14, the verb used to describe the construction of the ark is «kaphar» : «You shall cover it with pitch».

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This verb then takes the meaning of removing, erasing, atoning. An atoned sin is one that has been taken out of God's sight, in other words it is covered.

«Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered » (Psalms 32:1 KJV).

The verb « kaphar » is thus related to the atonement of sins.

Leviticus 16 teaches us that each year, the sins of the Israelites were covered on Yom Kippur. Even then, it was still the Lord who would cover the sin of the people using the blood of animals.

We therefore understand that when pastors have the audacity of presenting themselves as spiritual coverings, they are using the verb «kaphar» out of context and substituting themselves to Christ, the rightful atonement, whose pure blood took away our sins. What pretense !

What does the Bible tell us? « But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood»

(Hebrews 7:24 KJV) .

Nowhere in the New Testament, is it ever question of any type of spiritual covering by a pastor. The early christians understood that they were all brothers and sisters, and that only the Lord Jesus-Christ was the head

(«kephal» in greek, which means chief ). Even the apostles were regular brethren at the service of assemblies (Revelation 1:9),

they did not claim to be bosses of other saints. They all lived in a genuine communion and the latter was vertical, in other words they were all equal.

« I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ» (Revelation 1:9 KJV).

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Let's note here that John, as the great apostle that he was, introduced himself as a mere brother. What an example of humility that many contemporary pastors know not of!

The only spiritual covering needed by early christians was the Lord Jesus-Christ. «And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence» (Colossians 1:18 KJV).

Jesus-Christ is the head of the Church, which is his Body.  
The word head in this passage is «kephal» which in greek also means chief. This term is also used in 1 Corinthians 11:3

«But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God »(1 Corinthians 11:3 KJV). This is the only instance in the New Testament where a mention of hierarchy is made.

In this passage, man is the head of the woman, (covering, if you will), Christ is the head or chief of man and God is the chief or head of Christ. If we want to talk about spiritual covering, we should then use this passage which teaches us clearly that man is the covering of his wife, and that Christ is the spiritual covering of man.

The spiritual covering implies the permanent protection of the covered person, however, God alone is able to protect his people at all times.

«I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber. Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is thy keeper: the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night.

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The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore» (Psalms 121 KJV)

d) The three levels of divine authority and social authorities

The Bible speaks of three levels of authority belonging to God:

- Sovereign authority, the authority of God : the sovereign is the greatest of all authorities. This level of authority is never questioned, because it is an absolute and infallible authority belonging to God alone. Nevertheless, the pope and many gurus attribute this God reserved prerogative, to themselves. Let's remember that Jesus is the only chief of the Church, which belongs to no man (Ephesians 1:16-22). Jesus is the only one to detain sovereign authority over his creation. Those who try to use this authority or take it over, will find themselves acting as the antichrist. The word «antichrist» does not only mean «against Christ» but also «in Christ's stead». For example, the catholic theology claims that the pope is the «vicar of Christ on earth». However, the word «vicar» comes from the latin «vicarius» which means «alternate», «substitute». The «ex cathedra» declarations of the pope are considered infallible by the catholic church; the opinions of the pope, thus replace the word of God. The so-called «holy father » takes over the place of the Lord, because he is considered, although being a mere man, the substitute of Christ. Likewise, numerous Protestant leaders take the place belonging to Jesus alone. This is simply outrageous and contradictory to the Word of God.
- Truthful authority : it is imposed by truth. The word «truthful» means «true». God (the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit)

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Spirit) always tells the Truth (Numbers 23:19). Jesus is the Truth (John 14:6), the Holy-Spirit is the Spirit of Truth (John 14:17). Scriptures are given by God as an expression of Truth and thus become a truthful authority. The Bible is of a higher authority than any other position within the church. We must therefore reject all practices the Bible does not approve of. It has truthful authority not only for christians, but also for all of humanity because she has been inspired by God (2 Timothy 3:16 et 2 Peter 1:21). Because the Bible is infallible and trustworthy, we should neither add nor take out anything from it.

- The authority of conscience : all men know the difference between good and evil, though they might

have never read the Bible. It is the principle upon which the ten commandments given to Moses were established. They are not simply reserved to Israelites but rather to all humans; that's why sinners will be judged by their conscience (Romans 2:12). The Bible calls conscience, the ability of knowing what we would not want our neighbor to do against us and what we would not do to him

(1 Corinthians 8:12 ; Romans 14:20-23).

The sovereign authority of God, the truthful authority of the Bible and the authority of our conscience are higher than all men, regardless of their titles or ranks. Our conscience must submit to the holy scriptures, that God has given for our instruction.

- Social authorities : kings, presidents, magistrates, police officers. The Bible teaches us that as christians, we must submit to diverse authorities in our society (especially in Romans 13 ; Titus 3 et 1 Peter 2:13-15). These passages have nothing to do with the authority that

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pastors or les priests appropriate, but rather that of judicial authorities (magistrates, judges...), political, legislative and executive (kings, ministers, police officers...).

What has become of: « Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you» (Hebrews 13:17 KJV)

This passage of Scriptures is often misinterpreted. The term «obey» comes from the greek «peitho» and means «to let oneself convinced with words». This verb also means «to convincingly cause one to do something, while reassuring them». Conductors must understand that the submission and obedience of christians has nothing to do with dictatorship, nor authoritarianism. They must, instead, reassure and convince the sheep that, what is not the result of conviction, is a sin (Romans 14:23). They should certainly not tyrannize believers by forcing them to obey (1 Peter 5:2-3).

Besides, Jesus warned the apostles in Matthew

20:25 against the spirit of domination. The verb «to dominate», in greek «katakurieuo», means «to tyrannize, to bring under one's power, put under a yoke ». The fact that leaders are supposed to «watch», doesn't mean they should rule as dictators, but rather as shepherds. According to the Word of God, the shepherd is he who gives his life for the sheep (John 10:10). The shepherd does not rule over his sheep, but instead takes care of them, by protecting them against ravening wolves.

The delegated authority that leaders have received, should not go beyond the boundaries set by God. A

leader should not interfere in believers personal lives to suggest, for example, a marriage. He should not solicit even for the work of the Kingdom, the help of a married woman without her husband's permission, because the latter is her head (1 Corinthians 11:3).

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Submission according to the Bible is not unilateral but mutual : «...Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God» (Ephesians 5:21 KJV)

Additionally, a leader, leaving in sin, should not lead the people of God. You should only submit to your leaders, as long as, they too, are submitted to both God and others, according to Ephesians 5:20-21.

Some leaders give more consideration to their projects and personal ambitions, than to the very Word of God ! But God will never give man authority, even spiritual for that matter, superior to the sovereign authority of the Lord, or to the truthful authority of the Bible. God does not allow man to hinder the conscience of another man or to require blind obedience of him. Each authority must be examined in the light of the principles given by God in his Word.

Christian leaders trying to impose their authority, end up hurting the sheep of the Lord. True Church leadership is a support upon which, christians can rest. Remember that the foundation of the Church is Christ (1 Corinthians 3:11).

Leaders should not lead from the top, often symbolized by the pulpit, or any other form of separation, but rather they must be in relationship with the people. The biblical notion of authority is always at the service of christians and not the opposite. As we have seen, those who abuse their authority are possessed by the nicolaitan spirit. «Nicolaitan» means «he who rules over the people».

The Word of God thus stirs christian leaders to bring people to God with wisdom and love. If they conform to the Bible, they will never be able to manipulate someone else,

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but they will teach the truth and encourage each and everyone to seek the will of the Lord. No matter what the weakness of the people confiding in them may be, they should help and advise them. That's why the only acceptable form of hierarchy, within the true christian Church, is the one established by God. In other words Jesus-Christ is the Only head and Unique Chief (Ephesians 1:22-23).

As a result pastors are not absolute authorities. Just like other christians, they have received the authority of Christ to fulfill the function they were entrusted with and nothing more (Luke 10:19 ; Mark 16:15-20 ; Acts 1:8).

Pastors have received pastoral authority, some have the prophetic authority and others the authority of working miracles. Let's point out, while we're at it, that all the children of God have received the authority of Christ over demons.

«Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you » (Luke 10:19 KJV).

In fact, the word «power» in this passage, «exousia» in greek, is translated authority.

Please note that the apostle Paul himself did not consider himself as an authority but rather as one having received the authority of Christ to build and not destroy brethren.

«Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the power which the Lord hath given me to edification, and not to destruction» (2 Corinthians 13:10 KJV)

We now understand that when a pastor presents himself as an authority, he places himself above others to become the head of the local church. Thereby, he takes on the ways of dictators and imposes himself as the mediator between God and men, a position occupied by Jesus-Christ alone (2 Timothy 2:5).

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CHAPTER 4

TESTIMONIES

To stress on everything discussed in this book, I wish to share a few testimonies that have been shared with me and which unfortunately confirm the unacceptable abuses taking place in many assemblies.

The names of the people

telling these stories will remain anonymous, given the threats some of them have received.

## 1) THE GOSPEL OF PROSPERITY, WORLDLY COMPROMISES AND MYSTICAL PRAYERS

As soon as you attend this church (C) for the first time, you get asked to fill out a welcome form on which you must provide your full contact information as well as your age, marital status etc. When an altar call is made, the pastor asks people to come forward and stand in front of the pulpit. He then prays laying hands on them, blowing over them and says : «Receive the Holy-Spirit». Thereafter, new converts are taken to a room located in the basement and where they get «brainwashed» for about half an hour. Then, they are recommended to take faith fundamentals classes, pre-requisite to baptism. In fact, unless one takes all nine sessions of those classes, they will not get baptized. Once, those classes are completed, they are baptized and receive a baptism certificate confirming their commitment.

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That's not all, after faith fundamentals classes then come membership classes. There's also a form to fill out in which people get asked once again give their contact info, age, marital status, number of people in their family, the name of their mentor...what's strange is that they never ask people whether or not they are christians!

Then the church photographer takes a picture of us or we get asked to provide a picture of our own.

These member classes are made of four sessions during which the vision of the church, displayed in the sanctuary, get instilled into us. It is summed up by the word LOVE (AMOUR in French).

A comme Amenez les gens à la foi en Jésus-Christ. ( as in bringing people to believe in Jesus-Christ).

M comme Manifestez l'Esprit et la puissance de Dieu (as in manifesting the Spirit and power of God).

O comme Orientez les gens vers la prospérité, le triomphe  
et le succès (PTS) (as in guiding people towards prosperity, triumph and success -PTS).

U comme Unir une nouvelle génération autour de la vision (as in Uniting a new generation around the vision).

R comme Remplir les nations des oeuvres missionnaires (as in filling nations with missionary work).

After, taking the new members' class, one must purchase a box worth 30 Euros, without which one cannot obtain the infamous membership card. Before one actually receives this card, they must absolutely have a one-on-one meeting with one of the church ministers.

There are also leadership classes, given in nine sessions to allow people to teach in homes. For that, the future home leader must pay 60 Euros.

Everything is very hierarchical in the gatherings of this so-called ministry. At the very bottom of the pyramid is the co-leader (apprentice), then as we go up towards the leader (the Teacher), the zonal leader (supervisor over two family groups or FGs), the regional leader (supervisor over three or four FGs), the person in charge of the district (administrator of cities where

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FGs are located), the person in charge of sectors (administrator responsible for conveying figures and statistics to the pastor).

The home cell groups or FGs ( Family groups), are divided into twelve sectors under the leadership of twelve people.

The Family Group meetings take place two or three times a week (generally tuesdays and wednesdays). Every member of FGs has a binder, containing pre-established teachings from the pastor himself, rather than the Holy-Spirit. Of course, the leader must know his lesson by heart. After all, he has purchased this binder for 15 Euros. If the leader is married, he must buy two binders because photocopying material is forbidden, as they each need to have their own binder.

Once a year (mid-September/beginning of October), the church organizes the Family Groups'convention, a huge celebration honoring FGs. Each sector leader asks the leaders under him to purchase uniforms representing his sector, in the presence of the pastor and the rest of the assembly. The celebration later takes on the form of a fashion show.

There's also the MD, by that I mean «Movement of Disciples». Heading it, is the pastor, representing the first generation. He mentors 20 people, of which 8 ministers and leaders from the second generation.

The 20 disciples (2nd generation) of the pastor each have under their leadership a network of Disciples. They supervise the third generation ; the 3rd generation supervises the 4th and the 4th supervises the 5th generation etc.The teachings come exclusively from the pastor, who teaches them to the 2nd generation and so on. These lessons target among other things character, consciousness, the ego, the diamond or potential within, etc. After that, it is time for the offerings. The latter must exceed ten Euros or one would get reprimanded by their mentor.

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The church also has its own bible school called the Power school. The classes given last for two years and cost no less than 1050 Euros.

We are taught on how to receive the spirit of the man of God or how to have confidence in life. We are also taught on numerous types of praise, one of which is hallal ! According to them, there are many types of faith (human, diabolical and Divine).

The graduation ceremony occurs towards the end of May and is done the American way: the graduates wear, for the occasion, long red gowns for the first year and blue gowns for the 2nd year.

There is also a great celebration of disciples called the Gathering of Eagles. In true hollywood fashion, they hand gold eagles to the best Disciple. The best giver of the church, the best parent, the best couple etc. also get rewarded. Here too, every network Disciple must purchase their own uniform and aim at being better than those from other networks, this is also known as a holy competition. During this celebration, lasting for the duration of three services, network Disciples walk, as being part of a parade, in the presence of the pastor, who wears, for the occasion, a brand new suit and bowtie.

During all three sunday services ( 9h, 11h and 16h30), there is a choir reenacting worldly songs of R. Kelly, or better yet Mariah Carey. The pastor then takes the scene and tirelessly preaches the prosperity gospel : «Declare that you are wealthy, visualize your house , your husband...». He affirms that a godly person should be characterized by their prosperity because, according to him, Jesus was rich and was made poor for us to be made rich.

In the meantime, Sunday school is taking place in the «super church». They teach children from 4 months of age to 12 to pray before a candle resting on a star each night. These same children insist on having their parents give them money for they too, must sow in the «super church».

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There is also a service every Friday night. All the assemblies are then obligated to pray in tongues for at least an hour in the dark ! We often witness rituals reminding me of those of freemasonry. We see people holding two rods shaped like a triangle while believers are asked to walk under these triangles, called the ark of Salomon, while listing the desires of their heart (marriage, prosperity, etc.).

I've also been told that one day there was a golden calf that the whole church had to touch (thank God I did not attend church that day !). On another instance, we had to write the desires of our heart for the ongoing year on a piece of paper and then put it in a basket.

This year (2010), during Passover, we witnessed the grand entrance of a persona, who supposedly represented Jesus-Christ with the theme song of the movie Titanic by Celine Dion playing in the background.

Christmas is celebrated in front of the christmas tree. Above the choir, singing christmas carols to the glory of Mary and baby Jesus, is a Baphomet star.

Debauchery is rampant among choir members given the fact that its leader is homosexual. Everybody knows that he dates young effeminates from the worship team, often wearing fitted shirts and «slim» jeans.

Way before that, in November, we celebrate the church anniversary. For the occasion, a huge cake is brought in and we all sing the church hymn. Yes, you read right : there is a hymn to the glory of this church !

Deaths are never discussed in the assembly, not even sick people. Nevertheless, the person in charge confided in some people and told them that there were over twelve dead people a month !

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As a matter of fact, I remember the story of one of the leaders who had been very sick and spent a long time in the hospital. Leaders were told not to visit her and the pastor didn't go either. She died without any support.

On the other hand, happy events such as marriages, births and birthdays are announced.

For the 8 years that I spent in this church, I was never seen by the pastor as the latter only received those who bring him a big check.

2) CONVOKED BY THE «LOCAL SANHEDRIN»  
TO RECEIVE THREATS AND INTIMIDATIONS

I had been very involved in a big church that I have left for some time now. A few years ago, I started asking myself serious questions on some teachings that were given, as well as some speakers whose teachings had nothing to do with the Bible. Everything was centered on the gospel of prosperity. We were asked to sow and sow some more, give to receive, work in the house of God so God would bless us and supply our needs...

In this temple, also known as the habitation of God, the place where God met with us, where his presence would manifest, the teachings were not centered on Jesus but rather on the fulfillment of our desires and pursuit of wealth.

The worst part in all this, as far as I was concerned, was what is known as the «sinner's prayer», in which people were told how to invite Jesus in their heart.

It was simply a repetition of words without conviction of sin, no repentance whatsoever and without any biblical basis. People were made to believe that they were saved, while they were all the while, going straight to hell.

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It was a place where the cult of the «man of God» over whom permanently watched a security team, was prevalent. We would celebrate the birthdays of «Daddy» and «Mommy», whose every need were catered to, so that they could concentrate on their mission: preaching.

Everything was computerized and managed, as if we were in an enterprise. Every little sheep had a descriptive file, including, if possible, a picture.

Sunday was a so-called work day consecrated to God, which implied that we had to spend all day in the «house of God». In any case, volunteers were required to attend all meetings. The only excuses considered legitimate were : transportation, childcare issues and sickness.

The word of the pastor was law and could be used as a substitute for the Word of the Lord Jesus. We absolutely had to obey the pastor as he was supposed to be our spiritual covering because he alone has received the vision from God, and if it were not for him, we would be completely opposed to God.

As time went by, I was growing weary of what was going on within the church both at a spiritual and practical level.

I was so shocked to see that the teachings on holiness and the rapture of the Church were so unpopular, at such a crucial point of the History of humanity and when the world leader is so close to being revealed !

I thought I was the only one seeing what was wrong and would often think I was losing my mind. Fortunately enough, I was not alone.

A few brothers in the church also shared my opinion. Last year, I made up my mind and decided to leave that church, as it led people to hell with its doctrines of demons. But, I did not know when nor how.

As it turned out, I got called by the «local sanhedrin».  
They (the pastoral couple) accused me of trying to destroy the church,

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of being a spy, and for the occasion called me names that I do not wish to repeat here, out of respect. To sum up their thought process, I was a member of the army of Satan, with all the underlying implications. This conversation had the feel of a police questioning, with yelling and intimidation.

The reason for all this was the fact that I was very well acquainted with a brother, also aggravated by this system of iniquity and who made it a point to warn, as many sheep of the church as possible, so they would turn back to the Bible, rather than the word of a man.

They screamed for bloody murder, while accusing me falsely of other things.

I tried convincing them otherwise to no avail. They would not acknowledge that one could disagree with a person, without being against them. They simply took everything too seriously. They also accused me of being too liberal in my thinking, of being strong willed.

Well, my mind was already made up and I wanted out of that church, it was then or never. I proceeded to telling them, that I was leaving and we said our goodbyes.

Though we parted ways in an atmosphere of tranquility and peace, a true vendetta against me began. Calls for defamation from the pulpit, calomny, false testimonies, intimidations, verbal threats of legal pursuit, manipulation...anyone who kept in contact with me, was scrutinized, believers were advised not to

speak to me anymore. That was absolutely mind boggling. I later found out that many people were so shocked by this personal vendetta against me, that they too ended up leaving the church.

These people use methods straight out of the mafia or the gestapo to harm those who would not give in

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to their demands. As you can see, it is a one man school of thought.

In conclusion, I would advise christian who truly love the Lord to run away from any church where the pastor is at the center of everything and to search scriptures to verify what is being preached to them, as Bereans would. Paul was not scandalized because these christians verified everything that was ever preached to them. If your pastor gets aggravated by it, you must run away from him!!! This simply means that he's not following Christ, for if he were in fact, he would be pleased to see that you were doing what the Bible says. As John the Baptist, he should rejoice when disciples go to Christ, because by doing so, he humbly recognizes that the sheep are truly his. With joy, would he lead people to our Lord.

### 3) A NEW AGE RETREAT AND DEMONIC MANIFESTATIONS

I wanted to talk to you about New Age. As you must know, this movement has infiltrated the church very well, though christians are still blind to it. For example, where I was, they had started implanting home cells in early 2009. At first, there was nothing wrong with it but when you took a closer look, you would soon find out that the things that were practiced, came straight out of the New Age Movement.

It is obvious that Satan is God's copycat. Just as the true church comes out buildings to organize in home cells in the end times, so does the harlot. They began organizing some type of spiritual retreats called «The Encounter with God».

This retreat is preceded by three pre-encounters of an hour each, supposed to prepare us for THE encounter.

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They are then followed by a series of three post-encounters. I don't remember very well what silliness was discussed, if not that we had to absolutely participate in it to forget the past, to be pure before starting a relationship with Jesus. It is in a sense, a second new birth.

I later decided to be part of a second meeting, to see what was going on, in an effort to refute these practices, that I knew to be fishy from the get-go.

This took place on a weekend, from Friday evening to noon on Sunday, at a hotel.

During the first gathering, we were told about the

«Peniel» and the necessity of repenting (anew) and the necessity of crying over one's sins to be

forgiven. I don't recall exactly what went on that weekend, but for so-called «prayers» or «deliverance» times, they would play music in the background with a song either in spanish or portuguese.

Here is the «New Age» portion : they would ask us several times to sit on the floor and to close our eyes to concentrate. We had to use breathing techniques (as in yoga or hypnosis sessions ) and go back in time to the day we were conceived, in each of our mother's womb. They would ask us to recall each moment of our life from that time, every moment of hurt, everything that should not be, our sufferings, etc. The purpose of all this was to free us from the past.

The participants would then burst into tears, scream and roll on the floor. For me, all this was plain demonic

manifestations, as none of it had any scriptural basis, it could only have come from hell. I can confirm this, because I had my eyes wide open while all this was happening.

If a person was not crying, as it were the case with me, the lady pastors would come lay their hands on my belly and admonish me to let the Holy-Spirit work, to let go, to cry, as it was mandatory for me to cry.

But since I would not do it,

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I was told that I was refraining the work of the Holy-Spirit. Pastors in attendance and their aids would then make their round to pray for participants, hug them, and hold their hands. In a nutshell, they would support them in this process, that apparently «brings peace». When it all came to an end, people were joyfull, they hugged one another and thanked the Lord, as they felt relieved.

Strangely enough, at the end, people were made to swear never to tell other church members what had happened for it was a surprise. The only answer we were allowed to give if asked was : «it was MIGHTY!».

Not only did I not agree to this, but I also swore to tell all my friends never to be a part of this retreat because it was not from God.

We then return to church, where everyone was awaiting us in euphoria. The participants would walk into the room

chanting «mighty, mighty, mighty !» under the applause of the little sheep.

Later on, they would get called to the platform and some would get to testify (full of zeal and in euphoria). In general, it was the people that had the most physical manifestations, during the session consisting in a return to the past. They would talk about how God visited them mightily and how they had been healed from their past. Of course, the whole room was full of enthusiasm and many wanted to be a part of the next «encounter».

People seemed to forget that these are methods used by psychologists and also in New Age meditation. Though, it is true that after this type of sessions people would always feel better and relieved, this did not, however, mean that it came from God ! What is God's portion in all this? Aren't Patients of psychologists and New Agers are in the same exact state after either being seen or meditation?

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Let me finally, point out that after participating in the post-encounter, one could open a home cell and be the leader of it. As you can see, it is a true and tried process.

#### 4) VICTIM OF PUBLIC RETRIBUTION FOR SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

For more than ten years, I loyally served within a ministry in Paris where I got slowly sucked into something, all the while thinking that I was serving the church of Jesus-Christ, my Lord and Savior.

When, by the grace of God, I had been called upon by the biblical truth on the Church, apostasy, as well as the end time prophecies that are being fulfilled in our very eyes, it suddenly dawned on me the kind of slumber I had been in.

Many of my brothers and sisters sadly came to this same sad realization. We all thought we had truly been serving the Lord, only to find out we were led astray by false doctrines : tithes, prosperity, the house of God, the worship of the man of God, pyramidal cells, spiritual coverings,..... and so on.

Struck by the fear of the Lord, it was simply impossible for me to come out of there alone. I had the duty of alerting others. I then decided to selectively discuss it with brothers and sisters, asking them to examine, in the light of scriptures,(as Bereans would do for Paul's teachings in Acts 17:11) the teachings and practices of the ministry. As soon as I was able to, I had a lengthy discussion with the pastor about it.

During our conversation, which lasted more than four hours, he never gave me a biblical answer. I was rather told

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about the absolute duty of trust and submission to both the man of God and to his word (biblical or not, because, he said, not everything is written in the Bible because all the books of the earth would not suffice to tell about the Lord's work).

As a result, we had to trust the experience of world renown ministries, who are authorities in the matter. My love for biblical foundations and the Word of our Lord earned me many qualifiers (fanatic, religious freak,...) and even mockeries. I was indeed told that wanting to systematically search scriptures to find truth was a utopia, the Bible was way too vast, that we would rather content ourselves with the teachings that were given to us, for fear of going astray ! After telling me that he had no scriptural references on the spot and that he would study the Bible for the questions I brought up to preach them to the assembly, he then proceeded to greeting us courteously. We left with a hope, that soon turned out to be erroneous.

Soon after, the same pastor started a long public retribution to no end (lies, intimidations, wickedness,...), resorting to methods straight out of the mafia and the most authoritarian autocratic regimes, backing away at nothing to traumatize the sheep to the maximum and keep them in the required spiritual lethargy. Ever since then, I was banned as well as all those who would show me compassion, one way or the other. Others had said « Come, and let us smite him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words !» (Jeremiah 18:18 KJV) But Jesus said «And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.» (Matthew 10:28 KJV)

Beloved, let's fear God rather than men !

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The sad observation is that of a church victim of usurpation of power in every respect. Jesus is a product (says the pastor) among other things. Ministry is a brand. Numbers are the end result. Monthly goals (number of souls to be won or to invite to prayer cells,...) are assigned to leaders chosen with that purpose in mind, under the pretext of building the Kingdom of God. But Jesus said «I will build my Church». The principles of the

world (competition and productivity, network marketing, name files, attendance records, rock-and-roll in church, ...) are widely used. Besides, the pastor's wife (or «first lady») likes to say that «flies can only be attracted by vinegar». The wild activism (done in the name of Jesus by the way) carefully kept, quenches all discernment. The Holy-Spirit is thus gotten rid of.

The man of God has replaced God, and his word has replaced God's. Comparing these teachings to the Bible and discussing them with brothers and sisters, is manipulation and control (according to the pastor). One might believe Bereans were great manipulators and dominators (Acts 17:11).

This ministry has become a pyramidal enterprise. The pastor is the boss-king, the sheep of the Lord are volunteer workers but mostly financial providers (tithes and diverse offerings ) under the growing yoke and control of the man of God.

Sin is no longer denounced, this would cause a reduction in number. It's «all for prosperity and tithes for all». Holiness is sung but never sought after nor practiced. Pseudo-ministries abound : parking, ushers, marriage, funerals, carrier of the pastor's Bible, one to open the door for the pastor, one to fill up his water glass, pulpit cleaner... they are used as baits

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to attain all types of ambitions and talents so that they may be linked to this system, whose size and numbers are the supreme value. Souls perish, lied to by fake conversions without the cross. Ecumenism is progressively taking up ground, while federations are becoming a refuge.

Brothers and sisters, let us not forget the times we are in. Jesus is coming soon and the rapture is imminent. Let's immediately come out of these so-called christian ministries. They lead people straight to hell.

Let's repent for the kingdom of God is at hand.

«For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. » (2 Timothy 4:3, 4 KJV).

Let's love, and come back to sound doctrine, which alone can send us to the Holy and just God, who saves.

Let's seek sanctification without which no man shall see God.

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CONCLUSION

Anyone aspiring to the creation of a SBE (Small Business Enterprise) must keep the following 10 commandments :

- 1) Thou shalt attend theology school
- 2) Thou shalt find a mentor to get ordained.
- 3) Thou shalt find a big room.
- 4) Thou shalt never denounce sin.  
(otherwise, you'll turn customers away).
- 5) Thou shalt preach the gospel of prosperity.
- 6) Thou shalt be an absolute authority.
- 7) Thou shalt require a good salary.
- 8) Thou shalt make rich friends  
and shalt ordain them into ministry.
- 9) Thou shalt admonish he who leaves your SBE, that they run the risk of losing their salvation.

10) Thou shalt nourish thyself of

personality cult and publicity.

These ten commandments might as well have been the foundations of the church of Laodicea, that the Lord rebuked very sternly. The angel, meaning the messenger, of the church of Laodicea had received, from the very beginning, a genuine calling but later forsook the Lord to create a SBE. He grew rich at the expense of believers, and claimed not to need anything. This church was obviously well off from a financial and material standpoint,

in the image of contemporary mega churches and their suit and tie pastors who love riding nothing other than nice cars. Please notice that regardless of the material wealth this church had, the Lord called it «poor, blind and naked».

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In fact, true riches for the Lord are not material, but rather spiritual.

« And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.»

(Revelation 3:14-19 KJV)

« Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also» (Matthew 6:19-21 KJV).

The messenger to the church of Laodicea, just as would many pastor-entrepreneurs today, had forgotten those beautiful words of exhortation coming from the Master.

«And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and

follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness »(1 Timothy 6:8-11 KJV).

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This passage is very rich in teaching. Every one desiring to truly serve the Lord and receive the crown of life must preciousely keep this advice in their heart.

Thousands of pastors, in the likeness of the church of Laodicea, refuse to be content with food and raiment given by God daily because they want to get rich at all cost. They unfortunately fall into temptation and many traps driving totally away from the Lord.

Some pastors's vision is the acquisition of private jets and villas, they desire building big churches and becoming notorious. To achieve this, they resort to marketing, to manipulation and sexual sins, which end up hurting many souls. Needless to say that faith, this total dependence we ought to have towards the Lord, has nearly disappeared.

Yet, it is written :

«Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: » (Ephesians 1:3 KJV).

Meditate on this...

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