

# Posturing: The Opposite of Christ

By Michael Clark

Today we often see men who are in ministry getting degrees and taking titles to them and seeking the highest places in their denominations and churches. We seem to be observing a Christianized version of the world systems of men. There is Pastor Wonderful, Prophet Profit, Apostle Covering, and Doctor Eschatology, etc.

Have you ever noticed that Jesus never went around claiming that He was the Messiah? Even when pressed by the Jewish leaders to say so, He seemed to avoid taking the title to Himself. Instead he let men tell Him what He was while they observed His actions and words (see [Matthew 16:16](#)). The title does not make the man, and neither do his degrees. On the other hand, Jesus did take the title "[the son of man](#)." There was nothing special about being the son of a man, now was there? Or how about the title that Paul chose, "[the offscouring of the world](#)" ([1 Corinthians 4:13](#)) as our example?

Have you ever notice that Christ's whole life was one of seeking the lowest place? He was born in a barn, and laid in a feed trough in the least of all towns in Judea. He grew up in a town in Galilee that also was considered least by the Jewish leaders of that day. Referring to Him they said, "[Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?](#)" He spent most of His life in what was called "Galilee of the Gentiles" with disdain by the Jews. He was rejected by the leaders of His own people and finally he was tried like a common criminal, crucified between two thieves and His body placed in a borrowed grave. If being born in the right family and having a place of respect in the local community was an asset for gaining power, somebody forgot to tell God.

There is a great lesson to be learned here. Today we often see men who are in ministry getting degrees and taking titles to them and seeking the highest places in their denominations and churches. We seem to be observing a Christianized version of the world systems of men. There is Pastor Wonderful, Prophet Profit, Apostle Covering, and Doctor Eschatology, etc. Then there are those out there who love to take God's name to themselves-- "Reverend."

He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: **holy and reverend is his name.** (Psalms 111:9, KJV).

Oh yes, and don't forget the clamor to have an "office," the office of prophet, the office of apostle, the office of pastor, district supervisor, etc. Did you know that the word "office" is not in the entire New Testament, but was added by men in later translations? Did you know that the so called "five fold" is a list of empowerments, spiritual gifting with which the one gifted is suppose to edify and build-up the whole body by the power of the Holy Spirit? These are not "offices" we can use to rise above the saints of God, but rather acts of service to the body of Christ (see [Matthew 20:25-28](#)).

The humble service the gifts were intended for is not what we see in most churches today. Instead we see posturing. Posturing is often subtle. It's what men do to make themselves appear larger than life in the eyes of other men. They feel the need to be set apart from the *ochlas* or the multitudes of "ordinary" people, "the common people, as opposed to the rulers and leading men" (see Strong's 3793) . This action of rising above another is often rooted in an inferiority complex that needs to be healed, not promoted.

Jesus, on the other hand, identified with the people, the *ochlas*, and was often found mingling with them. He was criticized for it by the Jewish leaders. How often we see people who love titles keeping the common people at arm's length or even further. This is not the Spirit of Christ. He did not have an appointment secretary who acted as if she went to guard dog school. I am afraid this is all too common today among recognized church leaders.

In contrast we find Jesus rebuking His disciples for trying to keep women and their children away from Him and he said, "[Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.](#)" In short, Jesus was a servant to all and always accessible to the little people, even saying that they will fill His kingdom, not the elevated ones.

Jesus was not one who graduated from the best schools of Rome, Athens or Jerusalem and therefore was not given any titles for going through the hoops. Evidently He believed that even without such an education, the Holy Spirit would lead Him into all truth and give Him the words from the Father to say in each

situation. This is what He taught and His adversaries never caught him off guard. It is also our inheritance in Him.

Education in the schools of men is a funny thing. For the most part, if you pay attention in class, listen to the things that the teacher puts greatest emphasis on, then parrot it back to him on your papers and tests, you will pass with flying colors. My wife figured this out early on in college and had no problem getting high marks from her instructors. She just learned to stroke their egos by repeating back what they were teaching and put the greatest emotion into. Jesus is too honest to play this game.

### **A Lesson from Life**

Recently, we went to a meeting announced over the Internet. A local man called the meeting to tell everyone who came that the present great move of God in the world is the house church movement. We heard how this is going on all over the world and that people are leaving the institutional church in droves. This could very well be and I, for one, would rather gather in a home with the saints of God in a casual setting than spend two hours in a pew being lectured. The problem with what this man was saying was that in everything he did and said he modeled the institutional church. It was even noticed by an old pastor friend of mine who was there.

As we went into the rented meeting room at a local motel, we first noticed that all the chairs were arranged in rows facing the front where there was the typical podium or pulpit set up for the speaker. Just like Sunday church, this brother was at the door shaking hands and welcoming the folks that showed up, asking them to take a seat. It was not a layout conducive to fellowship among those who came. Tell me, is the furniture in your home arranged like this or does it resemble a circle so that you can be family together? Then why do we think that the family of God should be treated any different?

Next, he took the front and center and started posturing. In a short time we heard that he had a degree in theology, a high IQ, had been a pastor for years in three different denominations, and had been a Christian for thirty years. Then he started dropping a few names of current international ministers he personally knew. This was not so that he--like Paul--could count it all dung except for the excellent knowing of Jesus Christ, but to set himself apart from the rest of us. He was set

apart by the arrangement of the room and by his history, titles, intellect, education, and who he knew. It became obvious that this was not about house churches where everyone relates to each other as family, but about one man feeling the need to rule over everything that happened under his supervision. I dare say that his presence was felt in the house churches that were aligned with him as well.

Next came the veiled threats. Men in control often let everyone know that they are apt to be shut down or embarrassed if they go too far afield from acceptable behavior. He announced that he was going to allow a few people to stand at their seats and share briefly how house church meetings have blessed them. Three or at the most four would be given a maximum of five minutes apiece. Before he opened the floor, he told a story about his favorite revivalist, D. L. Moody. At one meeting, a fellow minister was making a long prayer, and Moody interrupted him at last by saying something like, "While our brother finishes up his prayer with God, I will speak with you what God has put on my heart." After sharing this, our house-church advocate and ex-pastor said, "O! D.L. shut him off quite effectively, and remember, I am a BIG fan of D. L. Moody."

Finally, when our house church advocate started preaching he told us how the house church was the new wineskin and that God was now using the house church movement to pour in His new wine of the Spirit. The trouble was that the whole meeting was a complete demonstration of the OLD WINESKIN! He even spent a great deal of time telling us about how great the past revivals were and what a student of revivals he was. It was obvious that the words of Jesus were being reenacted once again before our eyes.

"And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; or else the new wine will burst the wineskins and be spilled, and the wineskins will be ruined. But new wine must be put into new wineskins, and both are preserved. **And no one, having drunk old wine, immediately desires new; for he says, `The old is better.'**" (Luke 5:37-39, NKJV).

Yes, for him as so often happens with many, "The old wine is better."

Before the evening was over we had been to a typical Sunday service, complete with special worship music and singing, announcements, controlled personal testimonies, and finally the grand finale, the pastor's sermon. Oh yes, he did give

everyone a free little book with an offering envelope tucked inside of it and there were the over-priced books on the book table. The more things "change," the more they remain the same.

This was not a demonstration of Christ, who is the basis for all ministry, but rather a demonstration of the world system, the *kosmos* that is in such great contrast to the kingdom of heaven. We could see that the man was still lacking the cross in his life and really needed a time in God's wilderness to strip away everything he clung so dearly that was not of Christ. It is not my purpose to belittle him by writing this and I have been careful to not mention his name or the city where this took place. I use this example to show what is and what is not acceptable to God among His saints in hopes that we will take our eyes off men, cease to be intimidated by their posturing, and obey the Spirit of God when we gather together as members of HIS body.

For there to be true edification in the body, each member must be allowed and even encouraged to join together and share with the other members the supply that God has given him or her (see [Ephesians 4:14-16](#)). If we truly want to see the church grow into the manifest kingdom of God, we must change the way we meet and relate to one another and return to letting Jesus be the Head of the body. The Holy Spirit must be our supply and our guide.

Saints, there is no substitute for the work of the cross and the excellent knowledge (intimate knowing) of Jesus Christ in our lives. There is no substitute for the unction of the Holy Spirit and the heavenly teaching that comes from Him as we open our hearts to God. Institutions can teach you the history of the church and tell you how many times Jesus used "[the kingdom of God](#)" as opposed to "[the kingdom of Heaven](#)" and try to make them appear as two different things. They cannot give you the *rhema* word of God you must walk by if you are to be His disciple. Remember that Paul had the best education that the Jewish system could provide and he counted his history, bloodline and education as less than nothing. Mark his words, "[We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies. And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know](#)" (1 Corinthians 8:1-2, NKJV). It is not what we know that counts, but whether Jesus knows us and we intimately know Him (see [Matthew 7:21-23](#)). We cannot effectively teach what we have not become. As with John, "[He must increase, but I must decrease](#)" (John 3:30, NKJV).

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