

Reminder of New Year's Eve Combined Service APC Central 10:30pm

**Here We Stand, We Will Not Falter
December 27, 2015**

On **October 31, 1517**, Martin Luther (1483-1546) nailed his Ninety-five Theses to the door of the church in Wittenberg, Germany. The action was a bold challenge to the authority of the Institutionalized Church by one who was a priest and professor of theology. Luther strongly opposed some of the things he saw, including the abuse of authority, particularly the selling of indulgences, a means by which the church, in exchange for money, completely forgave a person's sin without requiring repentance. Proceeds from indulgences funded the extravagance and pomp of the church hierarchy.

In **April 1521**, Luther appeared before Roman Emperor Charles V at the Diet of Worms ("diet" meaning a formal meeting, and Worms being a city south of Frankfurt) to defend what he had taught and written. At the end of his speech, he spoke these now famous words:

*"Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Holy Scriptures or by evident reason-for I can believe neither pope nor councils alone, as it is clear that they have erred repeatedly and contradicted themselves-I consider myself convicted by the testimony of Holy Scripture, which is my basis; **my conscience is captive to the Word of God. Thus I cannot and will not recant**, because acting against one's conscience is neither safe nor sound. God help me. Amen."* - Martin Luther. [Luther's speech, rendered by Heiko Oberman, in "Luther: Man Between God and the Devil (English edition Yale, 1989)]

Time to lift up our voice, Time to take our stand

The Church is called to be the pillar and ground of truth - the upholder and foundation of truth.

1 Timothy 3:15

but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

We are called to be salt and light - salt must release its flavor, light must shine - to be of any value.

Matthew 5:13-16

13 "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.

14 "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.

15 Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.

16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

As it was in the days of old, even today, we have all kinds of winds of strange doctrines (ideas, philosophies, etc.) that are blowing through the Church and we must guard against these.

Ephesians 4:14-15

14 that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting,

15 but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—

God begins by first dealing with the sin in His own House...Judgment must begin at the house of God

1 Peter 4:17

17 For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?

There is so much of compromise in the Church. And we need to raise an alarm.

It is time that we raised up our voice and let the truth be heard.

Isaiah 58:1 "Cry aloud, spare not; Lift up your voice like a trumpet; Tell My people their transgression, And the house of Jacob their sins.

Our intent is not to be judgmental or condemning but to be clear, bold and direct, so that people will hear and know the truth. We are especially concerned about Christians who are exposed to "Western Christianity" or Christianity as is being practiced in the Western world - we tend to take in everything that goes on there. We need to be discerning and stay with the truth.

The Church

While there are several important issues facing the Church today, we wish to bring out attention to these:

#1, Entertainment instead of discipling

The purpose of the church is to win souls, make disciples and equip people for life and ministry. Every believer has to be equipped to do the work of the ministry.

Ephesians 4:11-12

11 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,

Our "entertaining" of people in church has resulted in too much lightness and looseness in the church—a spirit of irreverence, spiritual lethargy, biblical illiteracy and consumerism, and a massive loss of spiritual fervor. Most Christians depend on the latest contemporary church fads and the popular clichés, phrases and cool statements of famous preachers - instead of knowing what the Bible says.

You need to know the Word in order to resist the devil - not the nicely crafted popular statements of a preacher.

And we also need to open up our lives to the supernatural work and ministry of the Holy Spirit. Every believer must be encouraged to flow in the Spirit.

We need to emphasize the basis of personal and corporate prayer, teaching the Word and moving in the Spirit. These are what it takes to build strong local churches. Spiritual houses that are built with heavenly materials.

#2, A Social Gospel and a Gospel of "inclusion" instead of the Gospel of Jesus Christ

Preachers are replacing the preaching of sin, repentance and salvation only through Jesus Christ by preaching politically correct but Biblically inaccurate messages.

There is pressure to please, be accepted to draw crowds and hence the Gospel of Jesus Christ is replaced with other things that appease people.

#3, Denying of the existence of heaven and hell, avoiding the message of the Cross, the Blood,

Similarly, the preaching and teaching about heaven and hell, the Cross and the blood are being replaced with preaching more appealing things. People will flock to hear sermons that make you feel good, without being reminded or challenged about the temporal nature of life, and the reality of an eternity that awaits us.

Paul warned Timothy about such things, and exhorted him to keep preaching and teaching the Word, and sound doctrine.

2 Timothy 4:1-5

1 I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom:

2 Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.

3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers;

4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.

5 But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

The World

There are many issues of importance affecting our world today:

Poverty, Hunger, Natural Disasters, Human Trafficking, Clean water, health and sanitation,

Education, Economic development, environment and climate change,

violence - ethnic or tribal conflict, terrorist activity

Religious freedom, marriage and family,

Human life and dignity: Abortion, Right to die, Assisted Suicide

Refugees and Migrants

..and others.

While the Church needs to make a response to all of these, this past year, we've seen a battle rage and succeed in some measure against the basic truth the church once stood by.

#4, The issue of homosexuality and the legalizing of same sex marriages.

Unfortunately, many Christian leaders have chosen to remain silent, some have made attempts to straddle the fence by making unclear statements, and some have gone right against the teaching of Scripture to accommodate what is wrong.

First we must understand clearly what the Scriptures teach about marriage, homosexuality and its consequences.

God designed marriage to be between one man and one woman.

The Bible states emphatically and clearly that homosexuality is sin.

Romans 1:24-32

24 Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves,

25 who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

26 For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature.

27 Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.

28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting;

29 being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers,

30 backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,

31 undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful;

32 who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.

One Ex-Lesbian's Plea to Pastors Across America

Published September 8th, 2015 Charisma News Magazine

<http://www.charismanews.com/opinion/51832-one-ex-lesbian-s-plea-to-pastors-across-america>

Dear Pastors,

There are things I urgently need for you to know. And there are things I desperately need you to tell me. I shudder to think where I'd be today if my pastor had not been bold enough to tell me the truth regarding homosexuality, a lifestyle in which I lived for more than 30 years. Pastors, please take time out of your busy schedule to read my humble plea.

First, I need you to tell me in no uncertain terms that homosexuality is a sin. Show me what the Bible says and tell me that the Word of God is eternal and does not change with the times. Please don't tell me that you won't address it or that you don't have an opinion. Because if you don't speak up, I am going to think that it's all right and will be headed for an eternity in hell. Pastors, when I come to you seeking answers, I need you to boldly speak the truth in love. My very salvation depends upon it.

Next, please let me know that Jesus' death on the cross was enough to cover any sin I have committed, including that of homosexuality. Please tell me that every sin, no matter how minor or major it seems, is an affront to God. If you don't, I will feel like my sin, because it feels more embarrassing or shocking, is harder for God to forgive than the others and I will be left with the wrong impression that homosexuality is the unpardonable sin. It's not.

And last, I need you to tell me to repent. Please tell me that true Christianity calls for genuine repentance of all sin, including homosexuality. And pastors, if I try to make excuses to live in my sin, stand firm because my eternal destiny hinges on it. And then, and this is so very important, tell me that God's power, mercy and grace are more than enough for me to live in absolute freedom. If you don't, I will think that homosexuality is the only sin for which God's power isn't enough. It is.

When I was looking for truth and answers, I walked into a church, just like yours, for the first time in years. I started attending regularly and started feeling the conviction of the Holy Spirit in my heart as I learned what it meant to be a follower of Christ.

I mustered up the courage to speak with my pastor and share that I was homosexual, thinking it was an unchangeable fact. When I walked out of my pastor's office, I had received the unchangeable truth: Homosexuality is a sin. God hates all sin. God loves me. Jesus died for me. I needed to repent from all sin. The cross was enough to forgive me of all sin. God's power delivers me from all sin. Jesus is enough, even for those who struggle with homosexuality.

Pastors, speaking truth no matter how difficult, does not have to end with people running for the exits. I am living proof! I have completely renounced the homosexual lifestyle, am a devoted follower of Christ and live in truth, victory and freedom every day of my life!

I will forever be grateful to my pastor for holding to the truth of God's Word, and pastors, I pray that your congregants will be the same.

With all gratefulness, humility and sincerity,

Linda Italiano, ex-lesbian and born-again Christian

Our Nation

#5, Rising Religious Intolerance

While there are in some part of our country open aggression against the preaching of the Gospel, with the possibility of this happening on a larger scale, we as the Church need to know where we stand.

We go back to what happened in the Early Church as our point of reference.

Acts 5:28-42

28 saying, "Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man's blood on us!"

29 But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men.

30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree.

31 Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.

32 And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him."

33 When they heard this, they were furious and plotted to kill them.

34 Then one in the council stood up, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in respect by all the people, and commanded them to put the apostles outside for a little while.

35 And he said to them: "Men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what you intend to do regarding these men.

36 For some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody. A number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was slain, and all who obeyed him were scattered and came to nothing.

37 After this man, Judas of Galilee rose up in the days of the census, and drew away many people after him. He also perished, and all who obeyed him were dispersed.

38 And now I say to you, keep away from these men and let them alone; for if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing;

39 but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it—lest you even be found to fight against God."

40 And they agreed with him, and when they had called for the apostles and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

41 So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.

42 And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.

As the Body of Christ, we will take our Stand by the Word of God empowered by the Spirit.

We will not falter, recant, withdraw or apologize for what we believe, preach, teach and practice.

Here we stand, we will not falter.



USEFUL RESOURCES



Watch our online Sunday Church service live stream every Sunday at 10:30am (Indian Time, GMT+5:30). Spirit filled, anointed worship, Word and ministry for healing, miracles, and deliverance.

YOUTUBE: <https://youtube.com/allpeopleschurchbangalore>

WEBSITE: <https://apcwo.org/live>

Our other websites and free resources:

CHURCH: <https://apcwo.org>

FREE SERMONS: <https://apcwo.org/resources/sermons>

FREE BOOKS: <https://apcwo.org/books/english>

DAILY DEVOTIONALS: <https://apcwo.org/resources/daily-devotional>

JESUS CHRIST: <https://examiningjesus.com>

BIBLE COLLEGE: <https://apcbiblecollege.org>

E-LEARNING: <https://apcbiblecollege.org/elearn>

WEEKEND SCHOOLS: <https://apcwo.org/ministries/weekend-schools>

COUNSELING: <https://chrysalislife.org>

MUSIC: <https://apcmusic.org>

MINISTERS FELLOWSHIP: <https://pamfi.org>

CHURCH APP: <https://apcwo.org/app>

CHURCHES: <https://apcwo.org/ministries/churches>

WORLD MISSIONS: <https://apcworldmissions.org>