

## The Bishop's Corner

### *Change is necessary for church growth*

Praise the Lord Saints,

“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.” (Philippians 2:5-8 NKJV)

Jesus always did the will of God, (John 4:34, 6:38) which went against the traditions, customs, and laws of the Jews. Jesus came to preach to His own people first because they knew God, but they did not receive Him. (John 1:11) In order for us to do the will of God, we must be willing to change and let go of old traditions so that the church can grow. (Matthew 16:24-25) Below are changes we need to make.

Even as Jesus went to the Jews first, we also must go to former members of our church first, who have not found another church. We should seek them first because they know the doctrine, God, Jesus, and the Holy Ghost. However, there must be a change in us before those former members will come back to our church. We must do a restoration work with them and preach the gospel, rather than customs and traditions. (Colossians 2:8-12)

Often, it is we ourselves who hinder the Spirit. We must start church services on time so that visitors will come into a service that is beginning and not see us on our knees praying. We should not preach too long but stop when the Holy Spirit tells us. We must also realize that it is not how well we have church, but how effectively we have church. We should not be afraid to use an iPad for convenience and other versions of the Bible for getting a good understanding of the Word of God.

We must lose our church arrogance and have the mind of Christ. Jesus made Himself of no reputation, so we must humble ourselves as He did and not be high-minded. (Philippians 2:5-7) We must put on Christ and not church traditions. We must deny ourselves (Matthew 16:24-25) and have the mind to save and not condemn. (John 3:17)

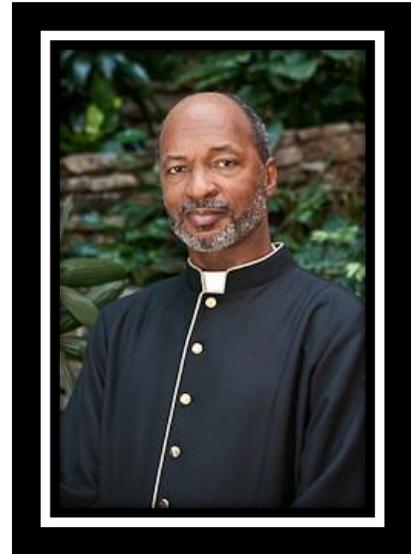
We must be fluent in the Word of God in revelation, and not just knowledge. (Ephesians 1:15-21; Romans 5:3-5) The Word of God must become life to us so when we're tried, and come through, the Word becomes revelation. When we're tried God expects us to use His Word to make it through any trial. We must be prayerful and diligent in the study of the Word of God. (2 Timothy 2:15) The Holy Spirit can't bring any Word back to us that we don't know, so He can only use us according to the amount of Word we know. (John 14:26) We must not pretend that we know the Word of God.

We must have the Spirit and power of God working with us when we preach. It is not enough to be filled with the Holy Spirit, but we must be in line with God and then the Spirit will work with us. We must be obedient and practice hearing and obeying the Holy Spirit's voice so He can lead and guide us. (John 16:13)

Finally, we must put ourselves in a position to be used by God by praying, increasing our faith and being a light in this dark world. (Jude 1:20-21; Matthew 5; Matthew 10:1-8, 40-42; 2 Corinthians 4:4)

God bless you,

Bishop Charles D. Smith  
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***For more of Bishop Smith's teachings, go to the Gulf Coast Jurisdiction Website at <http://www.gulfcoastclgi.org> and click on "Encouragement" then "Teachings."***