

Chapter 1 : Our True Identity " www.nxgvision.com

*"The Church's True Identity" (part 1)! 1 Peter ! Perhaps the most important thing about you is how you answer the question, "Who am I?"*

I go back and look at the model in Acts 2: And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. This passage tells us everything that early church did. They were the true evangelical church. It means the church who has theology on evangelism and discipleship. The people back then were the true evangelical church. They were fulfilling the great commission of what Jesus commanded us to do. First, tell others about Him. Lastly, we are to teach them everything Jesus has taught the disciples. This could be found in the Gospel of Matthew What is the very first thing a follower of Jesus must do? They must have love. What is the meaning of the word love? The word love is just tossed around. I love you or I love this TV show. First things first, love in the Greek is agape. Jesus had sacrificial love for us when He died on the cross for our sins. This tells us He had sacrificial love for us enough to die for our sins. Even in the sin we committed or will commit, Jesus still showed us sacrificial love by dying a horrendous death. He was beaten to the point where His bones were showing. Then He had to carry a cross up a hill to where He was going to die not wearing hardly any clothes. Nails were drove in His wrists and in His ankles. Imagine how painful that is. Then while He was on there He had to use a lot strength just to lift up on the cross to breath. Slowly and surely Jesus died from suffocation and bleeding to death. Jesus showed us the true definition of love. We see that all throughout the scriptures. Where we see it most is where God had spared the lives of the children of Israel. The children did so many things wrong including idolatry. However, when God judged them, we see He judged them with sacrificial love. This showed that God was wanting to forgive them of their sins. Refer to the book of Leviticus. It tells us the first law that God gave the people. It also tells them how to do burnt offerings. Sacrificial love is what God and Jesus had for all the people of the world then and now. Then Jesus said to share that same love for our neighbors daily. To love your neighbor as yourself. Then to love the Lord with everything. That means being able to have the sacrificial love for Him as He did for us. The church The local and the over all body of Christ needs to understand this first and foremost if they wish to reach people. Without love ALL ministry is pointless. The great commission is found in Matthew This is based off of the grounds of love. Jesus is simply telling us to act upon that love by telling others about Him and then discipleship. It is important we disciple individuals after they receive Christ. This is love that Jesus told us about to love our neighbors. Jesus wants us share our story to others, to serve others, to disciples others, etc all grounded on the one word love. The church is not doing that though. Well the majority of the church. There are some local churches who are using the model of Acts 2: This particular assembly Which is what the word church means. The church is not the building it is the people. However, the factor is that they love on them, they have compassion on them. Is that the case for all churches? No it is not. This is not sharing the sacrificial love of Christ. It is spreading hate. They say God hates gay people. He loves everyone despite of their sin. Then you have Pastors who say that they are glad that people die. How can a minister of the faith say that about people who have not yet gave their life to Christ? That is what we must understand. We must love the person hate the sin. We may not agree with what they do, but we must love them. God can never have hatred, it is outside the attribute of God. Jesus said hate is the same as murder. However, not only that He sent Jesus so that we can have a relationship with Him forever. God wants to guide us, nurture us, wants us to lean on Him, trust in Him, talk to Him, etc. This is the relationship God desires from all the people of the world. The great commission is a response of love for the lost. If we have no love then all ministry is pointless. Let us start with sacrificial love and let that love compel us enough to share that love with the world. This is the true identity of the church.

**Chapter 2 : Israel and the Church - What's the Relationship?**

*"The Church's True Identity" (part 2)! 1 Peter ! How you answer the question, "Who am I?" may in fact be the most important thing about you.*

She is a Christian speaker, Bible teacher, writer, and blogger that has a passion for God and His word. She helps other believers in Jesus Christ to learn and grow in their relationships with Him and in His word. Tuition is a onetime financial investment of your choosing. [Click Here for Details](#) Here are the scripture references Genesis 1: I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. The old has gone, the new is here! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. Now if we are children, then we are heirs heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth. Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered. No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. In this world we are like Jesus.

### Chapter 3 : The Believers True Identity in Christ

*The churches true identity is supposed to be rooted in love and compassion. I go back and look at the model in Acts 42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43 Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by.*

His was a serious case of mistaken ethnic identity – with no German DNA whatsoever. He had to rethink a lifetime of self-identity and a closet full of lederhosen. Along similar lines, the late Dutch theologian and author Henri J. Nouwen would testify that no matter how unimpeachable our family tree may be, we are all susceptible to being hoodwinked when it comes to our spiritual self-identity. Nouwen believed we are tempted to respond in one of three ways: I am what I do accomplishments or failures within relationships and career. I am what others say about me good reputation or gossiped about behind the back. I am what I have big house or foreclosure notice, picturesque family or estrangement, balanced check book or pile of debt. For Nouwen, our identity is absolutely not found in any of these indicators. Instead, he argued, you are – most profoundly – the Beloved of God. For emphasis, he would probably recommend reading that a second time. Your worth as a man, your value as a woman, and your capacity to be loved by God have nothing to do with what you do, what others say about you, or what possessions you have. Long before you had a career, a reputation, or a mortgage, you were loved by God – from eternity to eternity. No less than St. Paul made the extravagant proclamation: For some of our friends, negative pronouncements said over them – sometimes from childhood – have become a curse that has created a spiritual prison. Past failures can become the very bars of a cell – making freedom an illusion. He was a brilliant theologian and scholar taught at Yale and Harvard who struggled profoundly with loneliness and depression. A little praise raises my spirits, and a little success excites me. It takes very little to raise me up or thrust me down. Often, I am like a small boat on the ocean, completely at the mercy of its waves. That is completely easier said than done. However, liberation begins when we allow the truth of our spiritual identity to be fully absorbed and take root in our hearts. You will always live as the beloved. You will live your pain, you will live your anguish, you will live your success, you will live your failures as one who knows who you are. I am the beloved of God. No one can take it from me. I can trust my friend Jesus and share his love with the world. As a pastor, Schuller wants his congregation to be free from the bondage of mistaken identity. The temptation to measure ourselves against our co-workers, neighbors, family, and friends is intense. The net result is everyone is tired because they are hurrying to be loved. Little do they know, they already are. After all, we concoct a million excuses why we are not loveable. You were worth it. You may not think so, but God does. It rushes in when vulnerability enters the room, when love comes to town. That is where faith in the goodness of God must stand with resolve. We can open our arms for the embrace – or pass on love. The invitation comes from the one who wore the crown of thorns. All the while, he knew his true identity was being the Beloved. Discovering our true spiritual identity frees us from the condemnation of past failures. We are loved by God. We always have been and we always will be. No one can take that from you. It is the radiance of that love that moves all other loves. When we fully absorb our true identity as the beloved of God it frees us to love other people without expecting them to fill a void that only God can satisfy. And love and wounds are never separated – that is the price of true vulnerability.

Chapter 4 : Find purpose in your church's true identity « iB2 News

*The Identity Of The Church www.nxgvision.com Jesus said in Matthew , "Upon this rock I will build my church," He spoke of a singular, divine institution.*

Parsons When studying the Jewish roots of Christianity, certain questions often arise regarding the nature of the "Church," the nature of "Israel," and the relationship between them. Do Gentile Christians become "Jewish" on account of their relationship to Jesus? Exactly how should we understand the relationship between the Church and Israel today? In general, Christian theology has developed three different interpretative systems that attempt to answer such questions: Replacement Theology The Church and Israel refer to the same group of people. Separation Theology The Church and Israel refer to different groups of people. Remnant Theology The Church and Israel overlap in some manner. As we will see, each of these systems leads to radically different conclusions, but before we attempt to explore them in detail, we will need to define some terms. In particular, we will need to define "Israel" and the "Church. The name Israel yisrael is formed from a wordplay using the verb yisreh the imperfect form of sara, meaning "will fight" combined with the suffix -el God , which is used to indicate the subject of the verb. Etymologically, then, Israel means "God fights. Israel further refers to the 70 descendants of Jacob who entered into Egypt under the auspices of Joseph , and that later grew into a great nation during the time of the Pharaohs. During the time of Moses, the clan fathered by Jacob is collectively called "The Children of Israel" or the "Israelites. It was this same group of people who, under the leadership of Joshua, began to take possession of the land originally promised to Abraham by God Almighty. After Joshua led the Israelites to victory in the land of Canaan, the fledgling nation of Israel functioned as a sort of priestly theocracy with the mishkan tabernacle as the central point of worship. In later centuries, after national apostasy, various shofetim judges arose that led battles against Philistine and Canaanite oppressors. Later, King David succeeded him. It was King David who wanted to build the great Temple to honor the LORD God of Israel, and on account of his passion, God made covenant with him by solemnly promising that one of his descendants would rule over Israel forever 2 Sam 7. David died, however, without building the Temple, though his son Solomon took the throne and completed the Temple project 1 Kings 5. The southern kingdom, called Judah, included the city of Jerusalem and the Temple. The northern kingdom continued to be called Israel. The two kingdoms often fought with one another until the Assyrian Empire conquered the northern kingdom around BC. The Assyrians forced 10 of the 12 tribes of Israel out of Israel the first Diaspora and brought in foreigners to resettle the land called Samaritans. Later, the the Babylonian Empire overpowered the Assyrians under the reign of king Nebuchadnezzar, and Babylonia sought to expand its influence by forcing Judah into submission. Shortly thereafter the Babylonian army attacked Judah and took more captives to Babylon the prophet Ezekiel, one of the captives, explained that God was allowing Babylon to punish Judah because the people had been unfaithful to God. The aggression of Babylon continued until they destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple that Solomon built c. Most of the remaining Jews were taken away as captives to Babylon. A faithful remnant of the Jews returned to Judah and began to rebuild the Temple c. The Temple was consecrated exactly 70 years after the Babylonians had destroyed it c. Antiochus also ruled over Judea and tried to destroy the Jewish religion by defiling the Temple and burning copies the Torah. This led to the Maccabean revolt which opened the way for Jewish independence in Jerusalem and the surrounding area. This victory is commemorated during Chanukah. After the death of Alexander the Great, the Greek empire was divided up among four generals, which weakened the empire. Eventually the Romans invaded Syria under the leadership of Pompey and Jerusalem fell under Roman rule. Awhile later, Jesus was born and performed His ministry to captive Israel. This is the start of the Galut, or great Jewish Diaspora. Theodor Herzl, a journalist from Austria wrote The Jewish State which called for the creation of a Jewish nation as a solution to the Diaspora. Herzl also organized the first World Zionist Congress, unifying diverse Zionist groups into a worldwide movement. After further immigration to Palestine, on May 14, , the Jews declared independence for the democratic state of Israel medinat Yisrael , a modern miracle that revealed the providential care of God for the Jewish people over the millennia. The rebirth of the

nation of Israel meant that after nearly 2,000 years since the time of King Solomon the nation of Israel was both independent and united. Israel was victorious, however, and the nation was born. Later, in the Arab-Israeli war, Israeli forces recaptured more of their ancient Jewish homeland, and during the Six-Day War of 1967, Israel retook control of Jerusalem. During recent years, the Intifada and the rise of Islamic militarism have again threatened to destroy the nation of Israel, despite various peace accords by world politicians. This historical definition of Israel implies that it is composed of those descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob who are otherwise regarded today as ethnic "Jews. *Kahal* from the Hebrew *kol*, "voice" is generally translated as "assembly" or "congregation" though other words are sometimes used. This is perhaps the crucial question, and a lot of the discussion concerning the relationship between the "Church" and "Israel" hinges on how we decide to answer it. It appears to be a significant fault of various English translations of the "Christian Bible" that the word "Church" was translated for the Greek word *ekklesia* in the New Testament, since this suggests an anti-Jewish bias in their work by implying that there is a radical discontinuity between "Israel" and the *ekklesia* of Jesus. In other words, if the same Greek word *ekklesia* is used in both the LXX and the NT, then why was a new word invented for it in the English version of the New Testament? In the New Testament sense, the word *ekklesia* refers to the group of "called out" people from every tribe and tongue in covenant with God by means of their trust in Jesus Christ. In particular, this *ekklesia* is composed of only those people who confess their faith that Jesus Yeshua is none other than Adonai come in the flesh, who died as a sinless substitutionary sacrifice for their sins, was buried, and resurrected from the dead. Historically understood, the *ekklesia* mentioned in the New Testament was founded by a Torah observant Jew and began with the Jewish people. Gal 4: The first followers of Jesus Yeshua were all Jews, as were all the apostles and writers of the New Testament. The "church" was therefore born among the Jewish people in Jerusalem. It is likely, therefore, that the 3,000 people who were saved that day would have been all Jewish. Acts 2: These earliest members of the new church met regularly in the Temple, where Gentiles were explicitly excluded. Acts 2: Note that the apostles Peter and John are recorded to have gone to the Temple for prayer during the time of the *minchah* afternoon sacrifices. Acts 3: The ministry of the Apostles continued exclusively among the Jewish people, among whom were "thousands who believed and were zealous for the Torah." Acts 4: Even after they were imprisoned but miraculously escaped, an angel told them to "Go, stand and speak in the Temple to the people all the words of this life." Acts 5: When Stephen was called before the High Priest and the council, he gave a defense that was thoroughly Jewish, encompassing the entire history of Israel before he was martyred. Acts 7: First, in his vision he said that he never would eat of the "unkosher" animals shown to him, and second, he had qualms about even entering the house of a non-Jew. This indicates, among other things, how steeped Peter was in the Torah, even after spending three years under the teaching of Jesus. Likewise the Apostle Paul was an observant Jew. He was born in Tarsus but was brought up in Jerusalem and studied under the famous Rabbi Gamaliel. Acts 13: By no means, as the following events during his ministry clearly indicate: Paul identified himself as a Jew, even to his dying day. Paul testified that he kept the Torah throughout his life. Acts 16: Paul circumcised Timothy, the son of a Jewish mother and Greek father. He considered Timothy to be Jewish and wanted him to be circumcised before taking him on a trip to assist with the ministry among the Jews. Acts 17: Paul regularly attended synagogue. And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three Sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures." Acts 18: Paul went to Jerusalem for the "feast" most likely Passover at the end of his second journey. Acts 19: Paul took the Nazarite vow. Acts 20: Paul sailed away from Philippi "after the days of Unleavened Bread." Acts 21: After leaving Philippi he sailed along the coast of Asia Minor, stopping at a few places along the way, but skipped Ephesus because he wanted to be in Jerusalem for the Feast of Pentecost. Acts 22: This was at the end of his third missionary journey. Paul lived "in observance of the Torah." Acts 23: Notice that Paul was not only going to pay for his own sacrifices in order to be released from his Nazarite vow, he was also going to pay for the sacrifices for four other Jewish believers! Notice also that this was performed at the explicit request of James, the head of the Jerusalem Church and half-brother of Yeshua. Paul observed that the prison ship on which he was sailing to Rome was going too slowly and "the fast was now already past." Acts 24: The "fast" was universally regarded to refer to Yom Kippur. In its earliest years, the *ekklesia* of Jesus composed a somewhat tolerated subset within larger Israel. After the national

tragedy of the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD, however, evidence of formal Jewish persecution of the followers of Jesus can be detected. This included the addition of the infamous Birkat HaMinim , a "blessing" composed by the Sanhedrin at Yavneh that was added to the weekday Amidah which invoked a curse on followers of Jesus as well as the Essenes. Jews unwilling to recite the Birkat HaMinim were suspected of heresy and subject to cherem excommunication. Since the Jewish followers of Jesus could not support such a claim and therefore could not support the war , the divide between Rabbinical Judaism and the early Jewish Church became sealed. Concurrent with the rejection of the ekklesia of Jesus by the leaders of ethnic Israel, more and more Gentiles came to faith, and the Jewish roots of Jesus began to be forgotten. This "forgetfulness" was solidified by various Gentile Christian teachers of the first few centuries who, influenced by Greek philosophy, advocated severing the ekklesia from its historic Jewish roots. The Gentile "Church" then came into prominence as a distinct entity from Israel, with its own mission and purpose. Sampling the teaching of many of the early Gentile Christian leaders reveals the "Gentilization" of the ekklesia: Marcion of Sinope AD was a Hellenist steeped in the ideas of Plato and Gnosticism and wanted to separate Christianity from any connection with Judaism and the law. Origen AD founded a school in Alexandria Egypt that taught the allegorical interpretation of Scripture. Origen was heavily influenced by neo-Platonic Gnosticism. He was also an antisemite who accused the Jews of plotting to kill Christians. John Chrysostom AD denounced Jews in a series of sermons to Christians who were taking part in Jewish festivals and other Jewish observances. Jerome AD produced the Latin translation of the Bible which became the official bible of the "Catholic Church. Augustine maintained that the Jews deserved death but were destined to wander the earth to witness the victory of "Church" over synagogue. Besides these Gentile "Church" leaders who rejected the Jewish roots of Christianity, various Church Councils of the third and fourth centuries likewise rejected Jewish influence within the Church and abandoned the Jewishness of Jesus and His ekklesia. These councils went so far as to forbid Jewish and Christian intermarriage, the observance of Passover, and worship on the Sabbath day. The Reformers tried to return the Gentile Church to its early roots, but sadly this did not involve a return to the Jewish roots of the original ekklesia.

**Chapter 5 : Restoring The Church's True Identity - Barnabas Network**

*The Identity of the Church In this series of lessons, we have studied about the establishment of the church, the mission of the church, and the unity of the church. In this lesson, I want to consider the identity of the church.*

But to copy another church ignores factors like location, budget, and volunteers. Here are three steps to owning your identity as a church: Know who you are. Churches can be faithful to the message of the gospel while using different methods. Jesus said that true worshippers are those who worship in spirit and truth John 4: Every church has strengths. Let me say that again—every church has strengths! Perhaps your church is doing a great job engaging and discipling kids, caring for widows, or helping families with the most basic of needs. Communities would be better off if churches worked to their strengths instead of trying to assimilate the strengths of the church down the street. Knowing who you are also means you know your weaknesses. Perhaps your nursery area is in need of major overhaul. Before you start plugging leaks, ask yourself this question: How long has this been broken? Our once-broken nursery is now a safe and inviting area of our church, and a place I applaud our leaders often. Take a breath and make a plan. Know where you are. There is great variety among our nearly 1,000 IBSA churches. Rockford, Springfield, and Marion share a state, but all have different cultures. As a result, I take time to clarify elements of the worship service more than I did while serving in Arkansas. Be sure also to own your area. Like many churches, we draw from several neighboring towns, but our first priority is at our own front door. Knowing who and where you are allows slight adjustments as you work to strengthen current ministry efforts. But you should also be asking long-term adjustment questions: Where are we going? What is the future impact we want to have as a church? When we asked ourselves those questions, our answer was clear: This was a vital step to ensure our growing youth ministry could funnel our graduates into a clear next step for their discipleship in our church. God has since brought a group of young adults into the life of our church who have connected well with our youth group grads. Be sure you know who you are. Be sure you know where you are. Be sure you know where you are going. What future ministry goal could your church set?

Chapter 6 : Church of Israel - Wikipedia

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Recognizing Our True Identity From Livestream by Guest Speaker, Brother Frederick on November 19, 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 marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: People like to focus too much on the negative aspects of the church. Focusing on only the negative aspects will give the impression of a weak or powerless church. God wants to show His power and authority through His children, but it requires us remembering who we are. Chosen Generation Scripture tells us we are a chosen generation. Chosen means that we were picked out by preference. And, we are a generation of people with the same experience and live for a common cause. We have all been hand-picked by the Lord of glory to live for Him and be a part of His church! Royal Priesthood Royal means magnificent, splendid, and regal. There was a time when only the high priests were able to step into the presence of God. But, God chose us to be a part of the priesthood who were able to experience His magnificent glory. But, when Jesus Christ died on the cross, we became a royal priesthood to feel the shekinah glory of God. Holy Nation Everyone normally wants to be everything but holy. God has the power and ability to transform anything unholy to be holy. When Moses was on the backside of the desert, he encountered a burning bush. God told him to put off his shoes because he was standing on holy ground. He transformed the mundane into something holy. We are a peculiar people—we have been purchased by the blood of Jesus! And, when we were purchased, we belonged to only 1—the One God Almighty. The church of today needs to realize that have been chosen by the King of kings and Lord of lords to do a work in His Kingdom. Do you now know who are you are?

**Chapter 7 : Find purpose in your church's true identity**

*Our True "Identity" Its importance can be seen in the activity of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church. In the Day Books of the Second Vatican Council.*

Subscribe to the Voices Newsletter Engaging views and analysis from outside contributors on the issues affecting society and faith today. Opinions expressed are solely those of the author s. Godliness or Political Victors? Thu 28 Jun 7: When that passion overflows it can divide families and friends, and has. As we have become all too familiar with it, the Church is not immune to this pernicious passion. This is because the Church is made up people, and we are not exempt from the ethos and mores of the society in which we live and thrive. We develop a mindset bred from the desire to create a lifestyle that concords with our own set of values. Inevitably, we gravitate to those who are like-minded. Thus we have become so invested in that sub-culture, and have secured our identity and worth so steadfastly to its collective values that we become emotional to the point where we will do almost anything to prevent anyone from changing it. This is where bitterness, rivalry and division spring up within the body of believers. And therein lies the problem that is eroding the moral integrity of the Church. Christians are practicing identity politics. Identity politics has caused Christians to compromise on fundamental principles that were once sacrosanct. Principles regarding a moral character have been jettisoned for the opportunity "get a victory" on social causes. Principles of truth have been sacrificed at the altar of the "end-justifies-the-means" philosophy. And principles of godliness have been subverted by "the lesser of two evils" theology. There are those who say that we can be godly and political at the same time. Granted, if, and only if that fragile balance can be maintained. Sadly, the Christian political practitioner tends to be the one compromising. And what suffers more than anything else is the Gospel witness. That seems to get lost in the passions of political debates, but it is damaging to how we are seen by the world. How seriously do we take our profession as Christians? Consider the response of a pastor when asked about supporting a brothel owner in Nevada for elected office on June According to a June 22 Reuters article, the pastor concluded, "We have politicians, they might speak good words, not sleep with prostitutes, be a good neighbor. But by their decisions, they have evil in their heart. Dennis Hof is not like that. Neither was he concerned with the many sexual assault accusations as long as this man was able to deliver on what he wanted. Yet that is the kind of parsing for the sake of political expediency we have become used to. Consequently, the Church is struggling with an identity crisis. They claim to believe in all that is right and good and just and true. That is bewildering because, as a principle, an apple tree brings forth apples. That is its nature. So whatever those champions are identified with casts a shadow over the identity of their supporters. This is not a zero sum game. There are no winners; they share the stain. To be blunt, that is normalizing ungodliness. It is saying that if an action allowing for the propagation of sin results in any way in some good, then that action is justifiable. That, my fellow believers, is ungodliness in action. Where then is the Grace of God that teaches us to deny all ungodliness? It is not the act of faith that believers are called to live by; it is, simply, sin Rom. I understand the fear of "losing" our religious freedom. But did God ever promise that we would have an easy time this side of eternity? That is a consequence of being a Christian. Our challenge is to maintain our godly identity in the face of all that, and not give in to the temptation to retaliate in the same manner as the world does Psalm Free sign up cp newsletter!

**Chapter 8 : The Church's True Identity mtg**

*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 marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy (1 Peter , KJV).*

Tenets[ edit ] Rather than being an organized religion, Christian Identity "CI" is adhered to by individuals, independent congregations and some prison gangs [3] with a white supremacist theology [6] [7] that promotes a racial interpretation of Christianity. Christian Identity beliefs were primarily developed and promoted by two authors who considered Europeans to be the chosen people and Jews to be the cursed offspring of Cain , the "serpent hybrid" or Serpent seed a belief known as the two-seedline doctrine. An early Christian Identity teacher, Wesley A. No single document expresses the Christian Identity belief system; there is much disagreement over the doctrines being taught by those ascribing to CI beliefs, since there is no central organization or headquarters for the CI sect. However, all CI adherents believe that Adam and his offspring were exclusively White and that the other pre-Adamite races are separate species, which cannot be either equated with or derived from the Adamites. Tax resister and militia movement organizer Gordon Kahl , whose death in a shootout with federal authorities helped inspire The Order, also had connections to the Christian Identity movement. Due to the promotion of Christian Identity doctrines through radio and later through the Internet, an additional fifty unaffiliated individuals are thought to hold Christian Identity beliefs. Adolf Hitler , however, did not subscribe to the belief that the Israelites of the Bible were Aryans; in a speech he gave in Munich in titled "Why We Are Anti-Semites", he referred to and disparaged Abraham as racially Jewish. Once on American shores, British-Israelism began to evolve. Originally, believers viewed contemporary Jews as descendants of those ancient Israelites who had never been "lost. By the s, however, in the U. He was raised as a British Israelite, and his father introduced him to J. He claimed as early as that the Jews were not really descended from the tribe of Judah , but were instead the descendants of Esau or Canaanites. This provided the catalyst for the eventual emergence of Christian Identity. By the late s the group considered Jews to be the offspring of Satan and demonised them, as they did non- Caucasian races. It is claimed that he may have been a " Ku Klux Klan organizer and a Klan rifle-team instructor. In the s, he was Gerald L. In addition, he hosted a daily radio broadcast in California during the s and s, through which he was able to proclaim his ideology to a large audience. William Potter Gale â€” According to claims of unknown reliability, Gale had previously been an aide to General Douglas MacArthur , and had coordinated guerrilla resistance in the Philippines during World War II. Gale became a leading figure in the anti-tax and paramilitary movements of the s and s, beginning with the California Rangers and the Posse Comitatus , and helping to found the militia movement. Numerous Christian Identity churches preach similar messages. Swift quickly converted him to Christian Identity. Neither Butler nor Gale rivaled Swift as a dynamic orator, and attendance dwindled under the new pastor. Colin Kidd wrote that in America, Christian Identity exploited "the puzzle of the Ten Lost Tribes to justify an openly anti-Semitic and virulently racist agenda. In short, Christian Identity adherents believe that instead of modern-day Jews, the true descendents of the Houses of Israel and Judah are the modern-day Anglo-Saxon, Celtic, Germanic, Nordic, and kindred peoples. Christian Identity followers believe that Adam and Eve are only the ancestors of white people , and that Adam and Eve were preceded by lesser , non-Caucasian races which are often although not always identified as "beasts of the field"; [45] for example, the "beasts" which wore sackcloth and cried unto God Jonah 3: Serpent seed Dual Seedline Christian Identity proponentsâ€” those who believe that Eve bore children with Satan as well as with Adam â€”believe that Eve was seduced by the Serpent Satan , shared her fallen state with Adam by lying down with him, and gave birth to twins with different fathers: This belief is referred to as the serpent seed doctrine. According to the "dual seedline" form of Christian Identity, Cain then became the progenitor of the Jews in his subsequent matings with members of the non-Adamic races. The serpent seed idea, which ascribes the ancestry of legendary monsters such as Grendel to Cain, [42] was somewhat widespread in the Middle Ages. It also appears in early Gnostic Christian texts as well as in some Jewish texts, for example a 9th-century book titled Pirke De-Rabbi

Eliezer. Son of the Serpent, David Max Eichhorn , traces the idea back to early Jewish Midrashic texts and he identifies many rabbis who taught the belief that Cain was the son of a union between the Serpent and Eve. This teaching is based on the theory that God created two "Adams" adam means "man" in Hebrew. To one he gave a soul and to the other he did not give a soul. The one without a soul is the creature known in Christianity as the Serpent. The Kabbalists call the serpent the Nahash which means the serpent in Hebrew. This is recorded in the Zohar: Two beings [Adam and Nachash] had intercourse with Eve, and she conceived from both and bore two children. Each followed one of the male parents, and their spirits parted, one to this side and one to the other, and similarly their characters. On the side of Cain are all the haunts of the evil species; from the side of Abel comes a more merciful class, yet not wholly beneficial "good wine mixed with bad. Carroll believed that race mixing was an insult to God because it spoiled His racial plan of creation. According to Carroll, the mixing of races had also led to the errors of Atheism and evolutionism. He instead believed that the flood was only local and that the Earth was billions of years old. Curse of Ham Racialism , or race-based philosophy, is the core tenet of Christian Identity, and most CI adherents are white nationalists who support racial segregation. It is also commonplace for some Christian Identity adherents to follow the Sacred Name Movement and they insist on using the original Hebrew names when referring to God Yahweh and Jesus Christ Yahshua. Some Christian Identity writers criticize modern Bible editions as well as the Jews for their removal of the original Hebrew name of God from the Bible. Unlike many Protestant Fundamentalists, Christian Identity adherents reject the notion of a Rapture , believing it to be a Judaized doctrine which the Bible does not teach. Cameron after the Great Depression. In , Rand published the article "Digest of the Divine Law" which discussed the political and economic challenges at that time. An excerpt from the article states: Certain groups are already planning an economy of regimentation for our nation; but it will only intensify the suffering and want of the past and bring to our peoples all the evils that will result from such planning by a group of men who are failing to take into consideration the fundamental principles underlying the law of the Lord. Identifying specific economic problems was not the only goal which Rand had in mind. He began to analyze how to make these changes happen through legal changes; thus creating strategic plans to integrate the Bible into American law and economics. The first goal was to denounce all man-made laws and to replace them with laws from the Bible. The second goal was to create an economic state that would reflect teachings from the bible. He also believed that the government had no right to tax land, or other forms of property. In accordance with this doctrine, tax refunds should be applied to family vacation trips or be applied to national festivals for Christian Identity movements. Gordon Kahl was the first CI believer who took the founding principles from Rand and Cameron, and applied them in order to take action against the government. In he stopped paying taxes because he felt he was paying "tithes to the Synagogue of Satan. Before he was caught for the murders, Kahl wrote a note in which he said "our nation has fallen into the hands of alien people. Predictions vary, including a race war or a Jewish-backed United Nations takeover of the US, and they endorse physical struggle against what they see as the forces of evil. He shall not live: Identity followers reject the label "antisemitic", stating that they cannot be antisemitic, since the true Semites "today are the great White Christian nations of the western world", with modern Jews in fact being descendants of the Canaanites. The money system encourages the Federal Reserve to take out loans, creating trillions of dollars of government debt and allowing international bankers to control America. Identity preacher Sheldon Emry claims "Most of the owners of the largest banks in America are of Eastern European Jewish ancestry and connected with the Jewish Rothschild European banks ", thus, in Identity doctrine, the global banking conspiracy is led and controlled by Jewish interests. It is a belief system that provides its members with a religious basis for racial separatism. Armstrong is inaccurately described by some of his critics, as well as by supporters of Christian Identity, as having supported Christian Identity, due to his belief in a modified form of British Israelism, and the fact that during his lifetime, he propounded observances favoured by many Christian Identity groups, such as seventh-day Sabbatarianism and biblical festivals. The Worldwide Church of God which Armstrong founded did not subscribe to the anti-Semitism commonly espoused by the Christian or Israel Identity groups but instead adhered to the traditional beliefs of British Israelism; i. South African branches of Christian Identity have been accused of involvement in terrorist activities, including the Soweto

bombings.

**Chapter 9 : The Church's Identity Crisis: Godliness or Political Victors?**

*After serving in ministry for 18 years, I recognize the enormous temptation to look like another pastor or church. When we see the "success" another local church is experiencing, we want it for our church as well.*

The Identity of the Church In this series of lessons, we have studied about the establishment of the church, the mission of the church, and the unity of the church. In this lesson, I want to consider the identity of the church. Now when I say "identity of the church," there are a number of things implied. I imply, first of all that there is such an institution upon the earth known as the church. That is something easily established, because it was promised by the prophets, and also by Christ himself, for he said: From that time on, the Bible speaks of the church as a definite institution. For example, the apostle Paul said: So, evidently there was in New Testament times a church, founded by Christ, filled with his Spirit, and of which every Christian was a member. Since there was a church of the New Testament, having a definite existence, wherein all spiritual blessings were offered to mankind, it follows that outside the church there is not a ray of hope or a crumb of comfort promised to any man. After the passing of these nineteen hundred years since that record, can such an organization be found upon the earth? If so, how can we know it when we read about it, or learn things concerning it? You see, there is a danger of counterfeit churches. Just as there are false gods, and false Christs, there is a danger of false, or counterfeit churches. How can we avoid being misled? Now, a counterfeit always implies a real article. For example, there could be no such thing as a counterfeit three-dollar bill, because there is no genuine, or real three-dollar bill. Therefore a counterfeit always implies the reality, and as you know quite well, the nearer like the genuine a counterfeit is, the more dangerous and deceptive it is. Take a twenty-dollar bill, for example. If someone tried to pass a twenty-dollar bill printed with purple ink, no one would be deceived for a moment. But take a fake bill which is the same size, and the same color, and with the same superscription, and you deceive multitudes. If it is important to avoid being deceived in material things, how much more important to avoid deception in spiritual things? Let me try to illustrate the necessity of assured identity. Suppose an automobile is stolen. The owner reports the theft to the police department and offers a reward for its return. Suppose it is described as "a white, model, Chevrolet Caprice, a four-door sedan, with an Oklahoma license number, CX In this way, the car is described and the identity is sufficiently complete. Do you think you could pick that car out, and know you had the right automobile? Let us say that the police department takes its stand by the side of the road and watches cars go by. Fords, Plymouths, Chryslers, and Mercurys go by, but no one gives them any notice, because they do not meet the description. Pretty soon, another car comes down the road. The officers perk up, and give attention. As it comes in view, they observe that it is a white car. They see that it is a Chevrolet Caprice, a four-door sedan. They feel pretty certain that it is the one. They see that it bears an Oklahoma license, and so they stop the car and say, "This is the stolen automobile. Of that we are positively sure. Because it measures up to the requirements. But there is one mark yet to be checked. What is the number on the license plate? When the number is checked, the number is different from the one stolen. Therefore, it is lacking in one essential mark of description. No court on earth would be justified in turning that automobile over to the man who described his stolen one. Surely everyone understands that all the essential marks must be found. I believe the apostle, Thomas, could be an example to us in making certain of our beliefs. Do you remember that on the first day of the week when Jesus arose from the dead, the disciples assembled behind closed doors, and Jesus appeared in the midst of them, and showed them his hands and his side. Thomas was not present, and when the other disciples told him about it, Thomas said: Thomas had some marks of identification that he intended to ask for when someone came along claiming to be the Christ. Perhaps Thomas should be censured for not being present at the first meeting, but remember that the other disciples had already seen the marks of identification. The disciples had been warned about false Christs. On another occasion, Jesus warned: For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many" Matthew So, Thomas had some marks of identification, which he intended to look for when anyone came claiming to be Christ. He intended to identify Christ by: On the next first day of the week, Jesus met with his disciples, again behind locked doors. This time Thomas was present.

Today the world is filled with churches. The person who thinks that there are no counterfeits among them is terribly naive, and ignorant of biblical teaching. In the book of Revelation, the apostle John said: The measuring reed, by which we are to measure the temple, or the church, is the word of God. What about the name you wear, religiously? Did God ever say anything about it in the New Testament? Can you find the name you wear in the New Testament? What about the items and the form of worship in which you engage? Are you following the practices which you can read in the word of God, or are you following the doctrines of men? But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" Matthew What about the doctrine of the church in which you claim membership? Do you teach only what Christ and the apostles taught? Remember the apostle Paul said, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed" Galatians 1: What about the church of which you are a member? What about its teaching regarding how to be saved? These are very important matters. Its Organization What about the organization of the church? Is it after the biblical pattern? The apostle reminded us that "Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: Can you believe that God had a pattern, which Moses had to follow when he was building the tabernacle, but that he had no pattern, no blueprint for the church? Its Mission What about the mission of the church? Is the work of the church in which you claim membership confined to the divine mission that God announced for the church? Its Character What about the character of its members? Does the church in which you claim membership demand purity of life and character? These are important matters. These are some of the identifying marks of the church. If it does not measure up in any of these points, it cannot be the church that Jesus built. Let us take these up, one by one, and have something to say about them. Its Name What about the name you wear religiously? Can you read the name in the word of God? Some of my friends say that the name does not matter, but I find the apostle Paul condemning the wearing of human names at Corinth I Corinthians 1: In order to be built according to the divine pattern, the church must be called by a name designated by the God of heaven and found upon the pages of his word. What name do we read in the word of God? Names applied to the church in general were: The church of God, I Corinthians 1: In its different phases, it is called: The kingdom of God, Matthew Names applied to individual members were: These were individual names and were never in scripture applied to the church. Its Worship What about the worship of the church in which you claim membership? The church which Jesus built met on the first day of the week to break bread, Acts They sang psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, Colossians 3: This was the only music provided in the New Testament plan.