

THE STATE OF THE NATION & CHURCH

The State of the Church
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INTRODUCTION

There are studies by Pew Research, Duke University and others that indicate a decline of faith in God. First in time in American history that less than half of population is Protestant at 46%. 23% of population are "Nones" or no religious preference. In 1967 2%, 1 in 50 and in 2014 it's 16% or 1 in 7. 4 in 10 go to church weekly. It appears that Christianity is losing it's influence in America. How do we correct this situation? We must first take inventory of ourselves.

NUMBER 1. God inspects His people.

- a. REVELATION 2-4 (don't quote)

COLOSSIANS 2:5

For though I am absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing [a]to see your *good* order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.

- b. What applies to the church corporately applies to us individually.

- c. We are the temple of God corporately and individually.

1 CORINTHIANS 3:16-17

Do you not know that you are the temple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you? **17** If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which *temple* you are.

1 CORINTHIANS 6:19-20

Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who* is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? **20** For you were

bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body]and in your spirit, which are God's.

NUMBER 2. Measuring Ourselves.

1 CORINTHIANS 11:28

But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

2 CORINTHIANS 13:5

Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified.

- a. Where are we weak and where are we strong. Honesty appraisal.

NUMBER 3. What is the Plumb Line?

AMOS 7:7-8

Thus He showed me: Behold, the Lord stood on a wall *made* with a plumb line, with a plumb line in His hand. **8** And the Lord said to me, "Amos, what do you see?" And I said, "A plumb line." Then the Lord said: "Behold, I am setting a plumb line In the midst of My people Israel; I will not pass by them anymore.

- a. Doctors do check up physically to measure our health.

NUMBER 4. Five indicators of Spiritual Growth and Health.

EPHESIANS 4:11-16

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, **13** till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; **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— **16** from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

- a. **Apostolic.** Sent Ones JOHN 20:21, the whole purpose of their 3.5 year training was to be Sent on a mission.

JOHN 20:21

So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you."

- The difference between Vocation and Mission. We all have the same Christian Mission but not all the same vocation.
- MATTHEW 6:9 "The Kingdom Come on Earth as it is in Heaven." Every society is to come under the influence of Christian principles, even tho all may not become individual Christians.

MATTHEW 6:9

In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.

MATTHEW 28:18-20

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. **19** Go [a]therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **20** teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even to the end of the age.*" Amen.

- Gospel of Salvation vs. Gospel of the Kingdom MATTHEW 24:14; 25:31-32, those nations where there is freedom of worship of JC are sheep, those who don't permit it are Goats.

MATTHEW 24:14

And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

MATTHEW 25:31-32

"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. **32** All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides *his* sheep from the goats.

- b. **Prophetic.**

1 CHRONICLES 12:32

of the sons of Issachar who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do, their chiefs were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their command;

- Spirit filled sight and sound. We hear and speak God's Word.
- We are in tune with what God is doing now. Restoration of all things.

ACTS 3:19-21

Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, **20** and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, **21** whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.

c. Evangelistic.

- Heralds of the Good News.

JOHN 3:16

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

2 PETER 3:9

The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

- Individual effort

MATTHEW 4:19

Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men."

- Corporate effort - all we do together to win the Lost to Christ.
- Our Weakest area. What are we doing?

d. Pastoral.

- Means to "shepherd."
- All believer are to be shepherds of one another.

1 CORINTHIANS 12:25

that there should be no schism in the body, but *that* the members should have the same care for one another.

- We have elders who are models of shepherding to all of us.

LUKE 15:4-6

"What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? **5** And when he has found *it*, he lays *it* on his shoulders, rejoicing. **6** And when he comes home, he calls together *his* friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!'

- Really loving the brethren.

GALATIANS 6:10

Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

e. **Teaching.**

- Students of Scripture.

2 TIMOTHY 2:15

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

2 PETER 3:18

but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him *be* the glory both now and forever. Amen.

- Two Questions: Are We Teaching The Bible: Are you Learning the Bible.

CONCLUSION:

Today is a day to drop the take the plumb line with us and examine ourselves regularly so that we can be the kind of Christian the Bible speaks of and represent God in this world as Christ did.