

Fee-Based Pastoral Care

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Central point: Imagine a child coming to his mother or father and asking for food or water, and the parent responding, “Well, let me check your account to ensure you are current on payments.” One can hardly imagine a home in which the children are forced to pay the parents for the care provided. Yet, that is exactly how the apostle Paul characterized those who demanded payment for preaching the gospel in Corinth: parents who demand their children pay for care.

- II Corinthians 11:7-14; 12:14-18.
- Matthew 10:5-8.

Principle at work: The higher the pay-scale the lower the access and care. Odd but true.

Huge budgets for salaries and benefits, but little or no equipping and maturity

Vatican building built upon superstition imposed upon the poor. Same today: massive campuses and buildings, monuments to someone’s ego built upon the tithing lie. Little or no care available, so Christians turn to secular psychologists and Twelve-Step programs.

There is organic Christianity and there is institutional Christianity (Christendom).

Organic Christianity is a family, the household of God, with *children, young adults, and fathers/mothers* in the faith (I John 2:12-14), and Paul was as a father within this family, though he was also as gentle as a nursing mother. In our day of “hard” Christian masculinity, this apostolic imagery finds no hearing.

- II Thessalonians 2:1-12.
- I Corinthians 4:14-17

Imagery of familial standing—

- Matthew 23:8: “Teachers” versus “brethren” (clergy and congregants)
- Romans 1:8-15: Paul’s consistent use of the term “brethren” to signify familial relationship.
- Hebrews 2: 10-18
- John 20:17

But the false teachers saw the gentile converts as customers to whom they could market their grand oratory and market credentialed ministry—these men set the standard for what would later become a professional clergy within an institutional Christianity.

- II Peter 2:1-3
- II Corinthians 11:4, 17-21, 26
- Acts 20:25-31
- John 10:12 “a hireling”—parental care for hire.

Summary

To spiritually healthy, and thus mentally and relationally healthy, believers are faced with the necessity to unlearn much of what they have been sold is Christianity. In this study, we discovered the contrast between organic Christianity and institutional Christianity (Christendom). We learned that the church is a family to which you belong, and not an organization and building which you attend. Genuine leaders function as servant overseers, and not lords with special powers and authority. Pastor-teacher is a spiritual gift, not a title. And we are all brothers and sisters in the household of God in Christ. Jesus is not ashamed to call you brother/sister which is the highest rank one can attain in the church. Not new—as old as the New Testament itself, but each generation must be reminded, for the natural default is to titles, professionalism, hierarchy, and pastors for hire—hirelings.

What you can do: You can begin today to refuse to call anyone reverend, pastor, minister, let alone father. The best title we can share is brother and sister. You can begin today to exercise your spiritual gifts, not in hope of achieving recognition or standing within the institutional church or a loyal fan-base, but in working with the Spirit through the Word, to care for one another—free of charge.

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