

Disorganization

In his copiously end-noted book on *“How Christianity Spread to the Ends of the Earth”* (the subtitle to Inexplicable, Trilogy, 2019), Jerry Pattengale betrays his ignorance of what the Bible teaches regarding the church of Christ and its organization. His statement about the growth and spread of “Christianity” (a term he abuses regularly throughout his book) unwittingly concedes the drastic departure from the Bible that Christianity took after the 1st Century. He states:

“With so many people coming to faith, and with influential “Christian hubs” in Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, Constantinople, and Rome, the church of Jesus Christ badly needed some organization.” (p. 58)

Really? Did the organization of churches of Christ need tweaking to work better than they were already working, *“having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone”* (Ephesians 2:20)? What he very accurately records is the history of a *“falling away”* (predicted in 2 Thessalonians 2:3) when many congregations of the Lord’s people would *“depart from the faith”* (1 Timothy 4:1), the indicators of which would be *“forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats”* (v. 3, doctrines that still identify the Catholic Church). This artificial need to organize artificially on the assumptions of an artificial authority completely and correctly characterizes how a general departure from the scriptural organization of churches of Christ found in Divine Revelation transpired.

First, as Pattengale records it, there were “seven significant developments (departures, JDS) in ancient European Christianity” (p. 58), among which were: (1) the forced imposition of a state religion by Roman religious thugs (like Pope Damasus, who “slaughtered his rivals and took power,” p. 59), (2) the proliferation of “religious orders” (p. 62ff), none of which are found in the Bible, (3) the Catholic Crusades (or the inhumane plunder, massacre and barbarity practiced alternately by Catholics and Muslims over a pile of rocks - Jerusalem, p. 67), (4) the Carolingian Renaissance (“Evangelism by coercion” wherein “some 4,500 Saxons {were} executed in a single day for refusing to convert,” p. 73), (5) the Protestant Reformation (and attempt to reform an already corrupt, broken and unbiblical Catholic Church (p. 75) instead of restoring primitive Christianity from the Bible, (6) a Catholic “Counter” Reformation (which introduced the cruelty of the Spanish Inquisition, p. 81) and (7) the

The Proclaimer – 07/13/2025

English Reformation (an Anglican response to “Bloody Mary” Tudor’s Catholic atrocities, replacing them with their own inhumanities, p. 86; hence, the Puritan exodus to the Americas).

Of course, none of these historical epochs has any grounding in the Revelation of God. Where are the biblical, autonomous, independent, self-governed church bodies (Romans 16:16; Revelation 2:1-3:22), or scriptural elderships over these singular churches (Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:1-7) or servant deacons serving the church of which they were members (1 Timothy 3:8-13) or simple, personal evangelism (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 8:4; no “programs”!). Leaving the Bible leads to the religious confusion. A true seeker of God ought to abdicate every human religious organization and go back to the Bible.

Ironically, this silly desire to organize extra-biblically led Pattengale to point out the continuing impossibility of religious “reform,” in part, because of “the incredible difficulty of reforming a complicated **bureaucracy**” (p. 85, emp. JDS). Oh, that those who seek to be called God’s children would abandon ALL non-biblical notions, in every mutated form, and embrace a total and comprehensive disrespect for every unauthorized organization... and just go back to the Book!