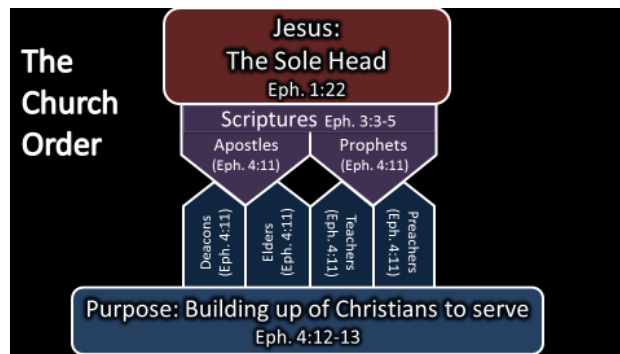


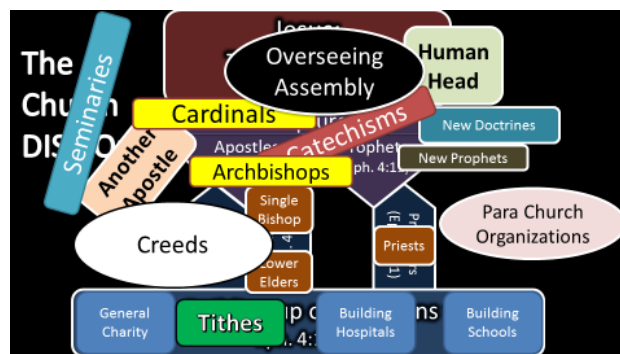
The Church's Simple Design 04-24-16 AM

The book of Ephesians contains a wonderful concise description of Christianity. It describes why Christ died, what His death accomplished (the church), and what God expects Christians to do in walking by Faith. All of this is done in six chapters. Such brevity reveals that the main message of Christianity is not complex or complicated, but is simple.

Let us consider for a moment what the book of Ephesians says about the church. Jesus is the sole, exclusive head (Eph. 1:22). He had a purpose in mind for the church from the beginning of time (Eph. 3:11), a purpose He specifically described (Eph. 4:12-13). He appointed Apostles and prophets (Eph. 4:11) who became the foundation of the church (Eph. 2:20). They did this by bringing to the written format the message of Christ, the New Testament, and thereby giving us a permanent foundation (Eph. 3:3-5). They commissioned us through scriptures to appoint elders and deacons in every congregation, evangelists, and teachers. Thus the church pattern looks something like this:



Unfortunately, over time men began to add to the pattern. It was prophesied that in time many would fall away (1 Tim. 4:1, et al). Early on it was changes in the eldership (from many to one, and two types of elders) and to the work of preachers. Then it was to the work of apostles and prophets, to the headship of Christ, and the purpose of the church. They then added new works, new doctrines and creeds, new offices and new means of collections. They removed other parts of the church that were not to their liking. The result was a confused mess that called itself Christianity:



When men tried to "reform" the church mess (the Reformation), they simply removed some things and kept others; they may have removed the Pope, but they replaced him with church councils or assemblies; they removed the catechism, but kept creeds. They even added their own purposes (social programs,

doctrinal changes such as “once saved always saved” or “saved by faith alone”). They failed to return to the original pattern because they did not attempt to do so.

Where did the church fall away? There was a constant warning about falling away in the New Testament. In Galatians 1:6-8 Paul tells us that even one change to the Gospel pattern results in error; thus when churches made just one change, they were in apostasy by God’s definition.

The concept of Simple Christianity is that it is not hard to find the church that Jesus built, and we have the total authority to recreate it by means of the New Testament. This was God’s plan per Jeremiah 31:31-34, telling us we each could find God’s purpose in the New Covenant.

Simple Christianity is great because it offers us personal empowerments. Ephesians 3:1-5 tells us that we can each one of us read and understand God’s will for us. It offers us the satisfaction of knowing whether or not we are saved (1 John 5:13) by our own seeking in Scripture (1 John 2:4). Finally, only Simple Christianity offers us real hope of Salvation. Not all religion saves us (John 14:6, 2 Tim. 3:5, Tit. 1:16, Col. 2:23). Only the real pattern of the church and the plan of salvation are the means to enter heaven.

When the Corinthians struggled with the changes apostasy offered them, Paul admonished them in this way: *But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ* (2 Corinthians 11:3). We to must be wary of being led away from the simplicity of Christ.