



TRUTH APPLICATIONS

Articles

WHAT IF WE TRY THIS?

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Gilbert K. Chesterton said, “Christianity has not been tried and found wanting; it has been found difficult and not tried.” Often quoted in response to critics of the faith, his words can also apply to churches seeking to make a difference in a resistant world.

Various reasons have been offered to explain current conditions. Some certainly ring true. Our world *has* changed. *Methods* that once worked better don’t seem to work as well any more, in some places at least; others sometimes see different results. There *are* different ways to complete God’s expectations without compromising truth.

What to do? Some churches are in turmoil over that question. Some debate about preferences; others are wrangling over fundamental teachings and practices. That said, many, perhaps most congregations experience broad agreement on how the church will conduct itself when it meets, and no one in their ranks is proposing abandoning divinely expected traditions of teaching and practice.

How the world responds to the gospel must be considered; not all societies are “good soil” (Matthew 13:23). But, what if the problem also involves what the church is like? What if our response to society’s changing standards is to be just a step or two away from where it is because we have gone along more than we’ve resisted?

What if our response to a world where people are too interested in prosperity to take time to be holy is to be content to squeeze in churchgoing among the myriad things we pursue to have our share of that life? What if concern about eternally trivial things disrupts worship focus because we can’t even make it through a service without checking on secular concerns?

What if our response to those around us who see faith as only a personal thing is a church life that looks more like individuals who happen to periodically gather for the same meeting than a community determined to do the work of ministry? What if our

response to people who think they have time enough to get serious about the eternal is to approach kingdom business with little urgency?

Jesus said, "Count the cost before you follow, take up your cross daily and follow me, let the dead bury their own dead, and, once you follow, don't look back" (Luke 9:23-27, 57-62; 14:26-33).

What if the problem is not that the world has tried his way and found it wanting, but that, as His people, we haven't really tried it ourselves?

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