

Matthew 15:9 (NKJV)

“And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.”

MAKE
RELIGION
GREAT AGAIN!

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If we want religion to be great again, we need religion with:

- Uncompromising preaching

“Some conservative groups believe that divorced people who marry another spouse are living in sin. However, the number of divorces in the United States has led most denominations away from that teaching.”

- Anthony Dunnavant in the Orange County (California) Register

- *1896 Methodist Creed Book*: No divorce, except for adultery, shall be regarded by the Church as lawful; and no Minister shall solemnize marriage in any case where there is a divorced wife or husband living; but this rule shall not be applied to the innocent party to a divorce for the cause of adultery ... (The Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church)
- *1914 Methodist Creed Book*: ... Ministers shall be prohibited from solemnizing ... matrimony between divorced persons, except ... innocent parties who have been divorced for the one scriptural cause.
- *1940 Methodist Creed Book*: No Minister shall solemnize the marriage of a divorced person whose wife or husband is living and unmarried; but this rule shall not apply ... to the innocent person when it is clearly established by competent testimony that the true cause for divorce was adultery or other vicious conditions which through mental or physical cruelty or physical peril invalidated the marriage vow ...
- *1960 Methodist Creed Book*: In view of the seriousness with which the Scriptures ... regard divorce, a minister may solemnize the marriage of a divorced person only when he has satisfied himself by careful counseling that (a) the divorced person is sufficiently aware of the factors leading to the failure of the previous marriage, (b) the divorced person is sincerely preparing to make the proposed marriage truly Christian, and (c) sufficient time has elapsed for adequate counseling.
- *1984 Methodist Creed Book*: Where marriage partners, even after thoughtful consideration and counsel, are estranged beyond reconciliation, we recognize divorce as regrettable but recognize the right of divorced persons to remarry. ... We encourage an active, accepting, and enabling commitment of the church and our society to minister to the members of divorced families.
- *2015 United Methodist Church* ... leadership voted to submit ... a ... legislative proposal ... that removes “prohibitive” language from The United Methodist Book of Discipline concerning homosexuality. ... the proposal would allow United Methodist pastors to perform same-sex marriages in United Methodist churches. ... this proposal does not consider homosexuality incompatible with Christian teachings even though Methodists have historically recognized the practice ... as sinful.

“I have proposed a path for these pastors that allows them to embrace people who are gay, lesbian, and transgender and to accept them fully — welcome and wanted — into the company of Jesus. I wrote A Letter To My Congregation when I realized my views had changed and I needed to communicate the intense theological, biblical, pastoral, and spiritual process that I had been through to get to this new place. It began with a burr beneath the saddle of my conscience: why was I willing to let so many divorced and remarried couples know that they are welcome and wanted while refusing that same welcome to gay and lesbian couples? How could I say to the remarried couples, whose 2nd marriage was clearly condemned by the plain meaning of scripture, ‘You are welcome and wanted,’ while saying to the two mothers raising their adopted child together, ‘I love you, but I hate your sin’?”

- Ken Wilson, The Vineyard Church

Acts 2:36-38 (NKJV)

“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.” Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

Acts 7:51-54 (NKJV)

““You stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you. "Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers, "who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept it." When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with their teeth.”

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If we want religion to be great again, we need religion with:

- Uncompromising preaching
- True sacrifice

Acts 2:44,45 (NKJV)

“Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.”

Acts 4:34-37 (NKJV)

“Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need. And Joses, who was also named Barnabas by the apostles (which is translated Son of Encouragement), a Levite of the country of Cyprus, having land, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.”

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- True sacrifice
- True conviction

Acts 4:18-21 (NKJV)

“And they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. "For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way of punishing them, because of the people, since they all glorified God for what had been done.”

Acts 5:40-42 (NKJV)

“And they agreed with him, and when they had called for the apostles and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.”

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- True sacrifice
- True conviction
- True love

Acts 12:1-5 (NKJV)

“Now about that time Herod the king stretched out his hand to harass some from the church. Then he killed James the brother of John with the sword. And because he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to seize Peter also. Now it was during the Days of Unleavened Bread. So when he had arrested him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four squads of soldiers to keep him, intending to bring him before the people after Passover. Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church.”

Acts 9:36-39 (NKJV)

“At Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha, which is translated Dorcas. This woman was full of good works and charitable deeds which she did. But it happened in those days that she became sick and died. When they had washed her, they laid her in an upper room. And since Lydda was near Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent two men to him, imploring him not to delay in coming to them. Then Peter arose and went with them. When he had come, they brought him to the upper room. And all the widows stood by him weeping, showing the tunics and garments which Dorcas had made while she was with them.”

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- True conviction
- True love
- True unity

Acts 2:41,42 (NKJV)

“Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.”

Acts 2:46,47 (NKJV)

“So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”

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- True conversion

Acts 9:20-29 (NKJV)

“Immediately he preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God. Then all who heard were amazed, and said, "Is this not he who destroyed those who called on this name in Jerusalem, and has come here for that purpose, so that he might bring them bound to the chief priests?" But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, proving that this Jesus is the Christ. Now after many days were past, the Jews plotted to kill him. But their plot became known to Saul. And they watched the gates day and night, to kill him. Then the disciples took him by night and let him down through the wall in a large basket. And when Saul had come to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, and did not believe that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. And he declared to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. So he was with them at Jerusalem, coming in and going out. And he spoke boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus and disputed against the Hellenists, but they attempted to kill him.”

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