

"One Set Man" doctrine

This chapter taken from the book *When Faith Came* by Franklin Whittenburg © 1998-2006

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This doctrine takes the head of the church, which is Jesus Christ, and replaces it with a "spiritual leader" of some sort. The "spiritual leader" now becomes the mediator between God and man. This is actually just an Old Testament Levitical pattern that is done away with in Christ. Our mediator (Jesus Christ) came out of the tribe of Judah, not out of the tribe of Levi (Hebrews 7:14 KJV), and the Christian covenant is built on better promises. Please read the study on "Ten Commandments Explained" and the "Old Testament Church".

In the "One Set Man" doctrine, the church, which is the ministry of Jesus Christ to the world, now becomes a ministry of "the pastor" to the world. The pastor now becomes the head of the church instead of a member of the body like everybody else. Please see the study on "HighJacking a Congregation" for more study on how this is done. Since the church is now "their" ministry, then they become the congregations "spiritual father" and you become their "spiritual sons" and "spiritual daughters" because you were "birthed" out of their ministry. You become "children of the pastor" instead of "children of God". People soon forget that God is our only spiritual Father and every member in the church is BROTHERS and SISTERS in Christ. There is no second and third generation Christians. As Jesus plainly taught:

But be ye not called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are BRETHREN. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased: and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted (Matthew 23:8-12 KJV).

There does exist two generations in the Christian though. In the natural, your father is a generation, you are a generation, and your children are another generation. In the spiritual there is but one generation of God's children because even Jesus, Peter, Paul, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, etc. are the believers' brothers.

For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren (Romans 8:29 KJV).

For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren (Hebrews 2:11 KJV).

In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus (Acts 8:33-35 KJV).

Jesus called his disciples “brethren”. In Acts 1:16 Peter refers to the disciples as men and brethren, not fathers and children.

And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,) Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus. For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry (Acts 1:15-17 KJV).

Paul did refer to Timothy as his son in the ministry and the other disciples referred to other believers as “my little children”. My brothers and sisters in Christ were birthed by the Holy Spirit and not by a “cell group” leader or pastor. You will just have to decide for yourself if you want to refer to your pastor or cell / small group leader as a “spiritual father” instead of God. Jesus said do not do it (Matthew 23:8-12 KJV). I will make that decision even simpler. Ask yourself one question. Who actually “sired” you, the pastor or God? After you answer that question, then call that one “father”. And yes, your cell group “spiritual father” actually thinks he spiritually “sired” you.

The third stage in this passage refers to Fathers. By virtue of the name, spiritual fathers have sired children and are described as having a long-term, deep knowledge of God. Page 333 (**Where Do We Go From Here? A Guidebook for the Cell Group Church** by Ralph Neighbour, Jr.)

The true order in the church structure has Jesus as the head of the church and the pastor, prophets, or apostles or any other "spiritual leader" as MEMBERS of the body. It is very important that there is leadership in the church and the Bible confirms this, but never forget that the church leadership are just members like you. The pastor’s job in the body is not any more important than your job in the congregation, its just different.

The job of the pastor is to make sure the congregation has a relationship with the heavenly Father, and not to replace the relationship with the heavenly Father! Many pastors and teachers today, and now apostles and prophets are trying to take the place of the Holy Spirit (Spirit of Truth) concerning the deeper revelations in a disciple’s life, instead of being a supporter of what the Holy Spirit is showing the disciple.

When I participate in a Bible study I can share with people some of the things I know according to the purpose of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). This is what I am doing with these studies, but unless you have the Holy Spirit you can never understand what I am sharing. That is why the Bible says that it is God that teaches you. The pastors, teachers, prophets, etc. are to work with God, not replace God. Some people that teach Bible doctrine can take away the key of knowledge though, be careful like the Bereans, and search the scriptures yourself!!!

Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered (Luke 11:52 KJV).

Just because a pastor speaks the Word of God doesn't mean they have the power of God. If they are faithful Godly pastors, then it is acceptable to show them respect and minister to their needs. The Bible says, "Do not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treads out the corn".

Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon (1 Corinthians 3:5-10 KJV).

John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven (John 3:27 KJV).

No matter how good they are though, the pastor or teacher doesn't have the keys to your understanding; only God can unlock the scripture for you.

And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life (1 John 5:20 KJV).

Even Jesus himself didn't teach his disciples everything, but left the deeper spiritual teaching to another source!

That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, (Ephesians 1:17,18 KJV).

I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will shew you things to come (John 16:12,13 KJV).

The main goal of the church should be to exhort and edify the believer and make sure that every member in the body was hearing from the Head (Jesus). God will grow the believer.

Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth. Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand (2 Corinthians 1:23,24 KJV).

I know several pastor's that agree with this also and they will be the first ones to point out that the congregation that they minister to is not theirs, but God's. Those pastors shall receive a special crown one day for their service.

Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away (1 Peter 5:2-4 KJV).

The pastor's job in the church is to point the people to Jesus, not replace Jesus. John 12:32 KJV is actually the true biblical church growth method and not cell / small groups.

And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me (John 12:32 KJV).

Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase (1 Corinthians 5:5-7 KJV).

Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth. Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand (2 Corinthians 1:23,24 KJV).

When a pastor and church leadership gets the direction for the congregation, they then are the most important part in the body. But when it comes time to move the church in that direction, the feet and legs now become the most important part of the body. Without the legs and feet to carry the eyes where they see we need to go, then the eyes can stare at the vision for the church for years and never get there. Once the feet and legs get the body to where the eyes see it should go, then it now takes the arms and hands to accomplish the task. They now become the most important part of the body. When the pastor takes the place of Jesus Christ as the head of the body and tries to direct the other members of the body in Christian service, then it usually results in confusion. That is like the hand trying to tell the foot how to walk.

When Christians start taking their directions from other members of the body and they quit listening to the head (Jesus) then the end result will always be confusion. As you can see, we all have a part to play in the body of Christ that is an equally important function as the leadership in the body (1 Corinthians 12:12-26). But everybody is not an eye or an ear or a hand or a foot, but the "small group" models that the churches are using today trains everybody to be leaders and all people were not called to be leaders. Their motto is "leaders equipping leaders". We ARE all called to be priests though. Some people in the

church are called solely to support church leadership not be church leadership. Also the "One Set Man" doctrine teaches that only one (senior pastor) has the "vision" for the church. Your body has one head (Jesus), but TWO eyes. Jesus sent the disciples out two by two. God used two or more anointed men for leadership and ministry, Paul and Silas, Peter and John and even the TWO witnesses in Revelation 11:3. There might be a chance of one man missing God's will, but two or three missing it is much less. I believe this model was used by God so one man would not be exalted.

For many years the church has operated under the belief that it is just the pastor that has the only word or "vision" from the Lord for the body. I had one cell group leader attempt to explain the whole five-fold ministry as fulfilled in the Senior Pastor. The "One Set Man" could step into any office of apostle, prophet, teacher, etc. and operate in any spiritual gift when there was a need for that ministry gift. If this is true, why then do we even need a five-fold ministry? Let's put a few of these super pastors to work ministering to the world and we can all go home and go fishing.

The "One Set Man" doctrine was presented to me for the first time at a small group "school of leaders" class. The teacher of the class drew a picture of the sun on a chalkboard with the rays of the sun shining on the pastor who was described as the "One Set Man". The congregation was then drawn underneath the pastor and the sunrays were then drawn radiating from the pastor down to the congregation. The explanation was that the anointing and power of God (sunrays) was poured on the head of the high priest (senior pastor) and then it flowed down onto the body (congregation) like an Old Testament priest when a prophet anointed them for ministry. Please read my study "The Old Testament Church". My "fall from grace" came when I asked one simple logical question to the class, "So you are saying that the senior pastor is the mediator between God and man"?

For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; (1 Timothy 2:3-5 KJV).

My question surprised the other cell group leaders, but their response to my question surprised me! I was immediately accused of rebelling against the pastor's authority for even asking that question. But I wasn't questioning the pastor's office; I was questioning the pastor's doctrine, which is totally different. That was the last cell group leadership class I attended. It is very important to understand that any Christian can biblically question a pastor, apostle, or prophet's doctrine without questioning their leadership. But what you see in the "cell group" church is the mentality that you cannot question doctrine **coming** from leadership, which is grossly in error.

Two more scriptures were also quoted at me as I finally left that congregation.

They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us (1 John 2:19 KJV).

Jesus said: ***He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad (Matthew 12:30 KJV).***

If you do not truly know who you are in Christ, then even leaving a cell church can cause you great torment. Once again this "One Set Man" doctrine is an Old Testament type of structure that is trying to be applied to a "new paradigm" church. How did this work in the Old Testament? To put it simply, God spoke to Moses, Moses spoke to Aaron and Aaron told the congregation what God said. The reason that some pastors love this "One Set Man" model is because they can replace God in the believer's life. God explained this to Moses concerning Aaron.

And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God (Exodus 4:16 KJV).

Our High Priest (Jesus) speaks to everybody in the New Testament church. Jesus said:

But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers (John 10: 2-5 KJV).

This "One Set Man" doctrine places another member of the body as the head of the church and mediator between God and man. By following this doctrine, my relationship with my heavenly Father could never be any closer than the "pastor" or "spiritual leader's" relationship with God. The Bible says that even the angels are our fellowservants even though they are stronger in power and might. This brings me to another question that begs to be asked. Why can this "One Set Man" talk to God and not to everybody else? Are the pastors "holier" than the rest of the congregation? Paul even said that the apostles were subject to the same passions as everyone else in the church and so was Elijah. The true Christian understands that their "holiness" comes from the indwelling Holy Spirit and their "righteousness" is a gift from God for faith in sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and it is those things alone that secure all Christians' personal access to God!

Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people. Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein: (Acts 14:13-15 KJV).

Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it

rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months (James 5:16,17 KJV).

For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; (Ephesians 2:18,19 KJV).

John chapter 10 says, “all the sheep hear Jesus’ voice”. The only way that this “One Set Man” doctrine makes any sense is if you rebuild the Levitical priesthood, complete with the veil of the temple restored, with limited and conditional access to God. Please see my study on “The Old Testament Church”.

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