

I Hate Nicolaitanism!

“Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord”

(2 Corinthians 6:17a).

A Warning to Leave the Hellenist/Roman Church System



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I Hate Nicolaitanism! (Part 1)

The Power Behind the Hellenist/Roman Church System

Introduction

The issue of the Nicolaitans that's addressed in this article may be entirely new to you. It was difficult to envision who the reader might be.

- Perhaps you're inside Nicolaitanism, and have no idea that you are in a religious system that God hates and fights against.
- Or maybe you're one of the over 40 million born again believers who have fled Nicolaitanism but don't know what God has for you.

In any case we trust that this five-part article will be an encouraging confirmation to those who have fled a God-hated system, and a warning to those still in it to leave while you can.

I spent over 10 years as a counselor to clergy. In some circles I was known as "the enema" because I was often called on when a host of sins and cover-ups had brought an atmosphere of hopelessness. I was called on to operate in the background of many churches, Christian ministries, even colleges and seminaries to unclog spiritual and relational blockages. You might say I spent a lot of time in the bowels of Christianity.

Then in 1993, our Lord in His great kindness drew my wife Sue and me to Jerusalem. There we had the privilege to research the factors that enabled the the early Church to be so relationally intimate and spiritually powerful. Our Father told us to call the message He wanted us to share, "**The Hebraic Restoration.**"

The Hebraic Restoration is our Father's means of restoring to us Gentiles the missing facets of what was once part of the earliest Church. His restoration is His blessing to His people because, at the same time, He is restoring the Israelites back to their land,

fulfilling His promise to the Patriarchs.

As we got ready to leave Jerusalem to carry this prophetic message back to the United States, we were warned by our Israeli Christian friends, "You're going back to the hardest place on earth for this message to be received. Christians there don't *need* God and they don't *need* each other." Their words, the very definition of Hellenist thought and Roman organization in the western church today, have proved to be so true!

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They Defame the Name of My God

What got me started on this article was a recently forwarded copy of a working draft of a forthcoming book, sent to me by a friend. The author is one of the leaders of what is called, "The Protestant Papacy" here in Colorado Springs. This individual is among those who are bestowing "apostle-ships" on people, placing these apostles over different cities and regions of this country.

The author cites a local well-known clergyman as a prime example of men who are being recruited into the new apostolic ecclesiastical structure. My sadness was that several years ago I met with this "local apostle" minister for lunch. He was very threatened by the implications of our little pamphlet *Prodigal Church*, and dissuaded many other clergy in his sphere of influence from investigating our material.

Humble, servant-style leadership is fostered in the Hebraic Restoration and is found at the core of the earliest Church. This pattern stands in direct opposition to the Hellenistic ecclesiastical system which has become the norm for so much of the Church we see today.

When I received the book draft, I didn't know how or if our Father wanted me to respond. As I prayed, I discerned that our Lord wanted me to clarify the very real differences between the Hebraic-based understanding of authority in the early Church, and the Hellenistic/Roman ecclesiastical systems which became entrenched in the church during the 4th century. Today these adapted Hellenist practices and Roman organizational systems are the standard for most Christian communities.

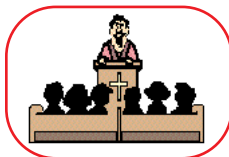
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We've previously discussed this topic in our books *Restoring the Early Church* and *Pastoring by Elders*. Our goal at the time that we wrote these books was to *inform* people of what our research in Israel on the early Church had uncovered. Now, however, *so much more* is being required of the followers of Jesus beyond just being informed. His people need to act!

Let's briefly review the elements of the Hellenist philosophical influence and the Roman organizational system that have so impacted western Christianity.

Hellenist (Greek) Influence on the Church

- humanism — places man, not God, at the center of everything
- God remains "out-there" rather than indwelling His own through His Spirit; religious practice designed to try to "reach Him"
- pagan temple worship with pews and pulpits satisfy soulish expression; repentance unnecessary or minimized
- dualism — material body is evil; only the spirit is good, so church rituals needed to make things holy;



- clergy class established to be "holier" than lay people
- clergy became intermediaries between God and man
- worship confined to steeped buildings—"God's House"
- theology – the study of God became cognitive and no longer a way of life; God's miraculous intervention of ongoing revelation of Himself now considered mostly historical
- virulent anti-Semitism; Older Testament disregarded as legalistic and irrelevant; Hebraic heritage totally ignored

Roman Organizational System

- efficiency of Roman Empire organization replaces personal leadership; Pontifex Maximus government office becomes Roman Pontiff church head
- ecclesiastical positions established at all levels of religious system; no longer a priesthood of all believers
- no longer a need to be "born again"; children "born into" Christianity and baptized as infants
- revisionists writings appear, transforming Peter into a Pope; history revised to fit new religious organizational pattern
- Bible confined to Latin for 1100 years; only educated clergy could interpret it; Church falls into the "Dark Ages"

I hope to encourage you through this article, *I Hate Nicolaitanism!*, to prayerfully take appropriate action in your own life and in your family's, especially as the Hellenist/Roman Church in the US is so rapidly disintegrating. Perhaps your loving trust in our Lord will stir you to begin to restore in your life the *personal responsibility* that which was an integral part of the earliest Church. May this article inspire you to make the biblical choice.

Perhaps your loving trust in our Lord will stir you to begin to restore in your life that which once was an integral part of the earliest Church.

The Hellenist/Roman Church Exposed

In the Introduction to our book *Restoring the Early Church* we included comments by many Christian leaders concerning the condition of the Church in the US. Since we wrote the book 8 years ago, other information keeps coming forth to reveal *the fall of the Hellenist/Roman Church system*.

For instance, the article below appeared in our local paper recently. From "Secular Jobs Tempting Clergy" [The Gazette, July 5, 2003]:

Among all denominations nationwide, **1,600 ministers per month are terminated or forced to resign their pulpit ...** The Southern Baptist Convention has reported that roughly 1,400 ministers per year call a toll-free crisis hot line. And nearly 100 Southern Baptist pastors leave their churches every month.

Some pastors step down after revelations of scandal, or stir up congregational conflict and division themselves. On the other hand, some are targeted by powerful factions in the churches that simply don't want them around. (emphasis added)

This article only added to a host of information that's come our way pointing to the rapid fall of the Hellenist/Roman church system. Destruction of pandemic proportions is impacting western Christianity, touching Protestants and Catholics alike. No denomination that we are aware of is free from this plague. [For related reading see our article, "*Impudence: Reflection of the Anti-Christ Spirit in Today's Church*", available on our website under "Hebraic Articles."]

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If you have any doubts that the western church has become our decadent society's mirror, consider these heartbreaking statistics:

- One afternoon during the mid-1980's I talked with a church leader of one of the top three Protestant denominations in the world about the clergy in his denomination. He admitted that the adultery rate of the clergy was in excess of 50% — and this was nearly 20 years ago! He told me, "If the people in our denomination found out, they'd leave us in droves."

Over a decade later we met a couple who counseled adulterous clergy in that denomination. They confirmed that the adultery rate was still over 50%. Sadly, there seems to be a 50%+ clergy adultery rate across the board in Protestantism today.

- In the mid-80's an official Roman Catholic publication stated that up to that time, the Catholic Church had paid out over \$400,000,000 in out-of-court settlements for clergy sexual misconduct. Recently headlined cases of pedophilia will cost churchgoers much higher sums than that. (The same article addressed epidemic homosexuality rampant in seminaries.)
- For the past few years, Protestant clergy have been close to the top of the infamous list of occupations that lead this nation in divorce.
- The "Bible Belt" has a divorce rate 50% higher than those who don't attend church services. The divorce rate of the Hellenist/Roman Church at large is higher than that of people not attending church.
- One of the leading international evangelistic ministries reported that only 4% of those who go forward at their crusades are found to be following Jesus even a year later. 96% walked away from *something*. Were they inoculated against the true Gospel?
- A major campus ministry reported less than 5% of the students who were active in their ministry during college are still walking with Jesus 5 years later. 95% walked away from *something*. What did they receive?

- Church youth work in the US has been found to be less than 3% effective in training up young people who walk wholeheartedly for Jesus. The average stay of a youth pastor in a congregation today is about 9 months.

“If the people in our denomination found out, they’d leave us in droves.”

Patching the System Doesn’t Work

The deteriorating condition of the Hellenistic Church accelerated so rapidly during the past 60 years that the church itself failed to hear the warnings God was sending it. Like the Titanic, which turned off its radios so that they wouldn’t hear the warnings of icebergs ahead, the Hellenist/Roman system drove out the prophetic voices our Father sent to warn them.

In the mid-1980’s God stirred me to go find those in Southern New England who were gifted in prophecy. I looked for them in different congregations, and discovered that most had fled. They’d been driven away from the church system by clergy who feared the divine exposure that the prophets were sent to reveal. Many of these prophetically gifted were at home wallowing in bitterness.

During this same period there was an explosive increase in *para-church organizations*. These ministries tried to compensate for the failure of church systems to carry on their biblical mandates. The Hellenist-based para-church reaped no more success in raising up committed believers than do Hellenist/Roman religious communities. There is a key reason for this across-the-board failure of Hellenist Christianity...

We Are Under God’s Judgment!

The rapid moral decline of this nation prompted Billy Graham several years ago to prophetically state, “If God doesn’t judge the United States, then He’ll have to apologize to Sodom and Gomorrah.”

Something is terribly wrong in a society that finds 95% believing there is a god, but

so few living lives that evidence that belief. These painfully revealing statistics indicate a silence in which little power of the Holy Spirit is being made manifest. And what is being seen through personal excused sin and carnival-atmosphere “Christian” entertainment is tarnishing His Name!

Don’t Ezekiel’s words judge *us* today as well?

Her priests do violence to my law and profane my holy things; they do not distinguish between the holy and the common; they teach that there is no difference between the unclean and the clean; and they shut their eyes to the keeping of my Sabbaths, so that I am profaned among them (Ezekiel 22:26).

I believe that our Lord’s judgment is already taking place, and that people aren’t paying attention to the indicators such as those listed earlier. Know this: There are “*dark days of chastisement*” coming upon the US, and we have little time to align ourselves with our Father’s plan to save us from the misery that many are or will be experiencing. Only you can study the facets of the Hebraic Restoration for yourself and ask our Father if this message is for you.

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Your alignment with the Restoration our Father has ordained for His children is a lot like the alignment required of the Israelites in Egypt. Before the Destroying Spirit was sent forth, He ordered the Israelites to put blood on their door posts to protect their families on the night of the Passover. Embracing the Hebraic Restoration — the relational intimacy and trust-grounded spiritual power of our forefathers in the faith — is your protection today. You need to be walking now under the protection of the blood of Jesus as His *wholehearted follower* in order to stand firm in the coming days.

I'm saddened for the well-meaning people who keep trying to patch up the Hellenist/Roman clergy system. So many of these caring men and women have gone under themselves because they are operating *contrary to God's plan*. He is restoring the Hebraic foundations of the earliest Church which evidenced such spiritual intimacy and world-impacting power.

God is judging a hierarchical church system that has NO biblical foundation.

On the surface it appears as if the Hellenist/Roman system is beset by gross sexual misconduct at the root of its decline. But I firmly believe that something of a *Divine plan* is unfolding before our eyes.

God is judging a hierarchical church system that has NO biblical foundation. There were no clergy in the earliest centuries of the Church. The position of clergy was an adaptation from Hellenistic and Roman pagan practices. By Emperor Constantine's reign in the 4th century, clergy had become the only sanctioned leadership in the Church. God hated this system that had made inroads on the infant church, and vowed to war against the people who practice it.

Many well-intentioned people have perpetuated a system that has gone on with different adaptations for centuries. By the time you finish reading this article I hope you will be convinced that our God hates this system, and take action accordingly in your own life. If God hates and wars against those who practice an unscriptural approach to worship, wouldn't you want to let people know the truth so they could respond as well?

First, let me briefly review what we've already written in our book, *Pastoring By Elders*, that addresses this subject. Again, when we wrote the book, we were trying to be informative. Now it's time for the true followers of Jesus to *take action*. As Moses warned the Israelites who were about to enter the Land, *confirm* what you've heard to be truth by putting it into action! (Deuteronomy 27:26)

Updated Excerpts From Chapters 2 and 3 of *Pastoring By Elders*

God's Judgment on the Nicolaitans

In the letters written to the seven churches in the Book of Revelation, two churches are confronted with the issue of the Nicolaitans. The letter to the church at Ephesus states, "*But you have this in your favor: You hate the **practices** of the Nicolaitans, which **I also hate***" (Revelation 2:6). These are incredibly strong words. Can you imagine participating in something that God hates? What if you are but don't know it?

Again, to the church at Pergamum John writes, "*Likewise you also have those who hold to the **teaching** of the Nicolaitans. Repent therefore! Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will **fight against them** with the sword of my mouth*" (Revelation 2:15,16). At least the Ephesians hated the Nicolaitan practices as God did. Some of the Pergamum residents, though, *embraced* that teaching. What an awful situation to be in. Would *you* like to be someone against whom God Himself must fight?

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This is exactly what our Lord is doing in the church today to expose and cast off that pernicious Nicolaitan influence that *exerts power* over the people. The church has become so proud in its tradition of Hellenistic practices and Roman organization that the Lord must oppose it. How else do you account for the immensity of clergy misconduct? For a divorce rate far beyond that of unbelievers?

The wide-spread use of worldly programs and entertainment for "church growth" are all part of the delusion to which God has been forced to hand over the Church in the US. Isn't this what is really going on inside Hellenized Christianity? How can you account for so many "Christians" whom polls show have values

and lifestyles indistinguishable from those of the ungodly society around them?

A “Christian” can separate himself so far from the Lord and His ways that He is compelled to let him *live the lie* he embraces: “For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie” (2 Thessalonians 2:11).

Nicolaitanism: Repression of Our Father’s Children

Most Christians today are so accustomed to the clergy/laity arrangement in their congregations that they are amazed or even angered when it’s questioned. It’s important for you to know that *Nicolaitanism* is a religious system of *control and power*, an ecclesiastical system of suppression and subjugation. Perhaps you’re not familiar with the Nicolaitan system that is so odious to God. The Nicolaitan system places a human intermediary, a clergy person, between individual believers and their God.

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This insidious two-tiered system is recognized by the very definition of the name. The Greek word *nicolaitane* [NIK-oh-lay-it-TAH-nay] means “conquering the people.” The first part of the word refers to *nikos*, to conquer or have victory over. The middle of the word is derived from *laos*, which means “the people”. The commonly used term “laity” is derived from it.

The Nicolaitan system *subjugates the people* by making “laity” out of them through raising up others who act as intermediaries between God and them. It combines the Old Testament Levitical priesthood (which ended with Jesus’ atonement to end that system) with the pagan practices of the Greco-Roman priesthood.

The spiritual *predominance* of a priestly (or ministerial) system is the goal of the Nicolaitan spirit. Individuals with the most

personal charisma or the greatest natural abilities are elevated to leadership. Nicolaitanism relies heavily on young men with a seminary education. This practice is in direct opposition to the Hebraic leadership of the earliest Church: older men with years of life experience that was gained through trusting and growing in relationship with the Lord. The criteria for leadership in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 requires that a man *prove* his maturity and abilities by his *way of life*.

Hebraic — *emphasizes personal character and Godly wisdom that was gained from life experience.*

Nicolaitanism — *personal character is incidental; tremendous emphasis on cognitive knowledge.*

Under Nicolaitanism the “laity” remain as spiritually immature children, dependent on their clergy for Bible explanation and creedal position. In this system few ever learn to live out as a *way of life* the Word of God as they are guided by the Spirit. With little or no personal contact with the “clergy”, the “laity” have no means to interact with the one they presume is a role model of godliness. No one can role model a holy lifestyle that’s pleasing to God from behind a pulpit. Pulpit sermonizing isn’t transferrable to daily life situations!



Nicolaitanism replaces role modeling as a *holy way of life* with Hellenistic-cherished *piety*. Airs of piety can make you assume a person is more spiritual than interpersonal contact might reveal. Ecclesiastic robes and other religious paraphernalia create a certain pietistic aura, but piety can cover up a person’s inner darkness.

Jesus criticized the shroud of appearances in His day: “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like **whitewashed tombs**, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men’s bones and everything unclean. **In the**

same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness" (Matthew 23:27,28).

Great spiritual destruction lies in wait for those who complacently abide in the clergy-laity arrangement. So great a dependence on the clergy person diminishes the sense of *personal responsibility* for *obedient trust* and the *love relationship with our Lord* that Scripture commands each follower of Jesus. And grievously, the laity like it this way.

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Nicolaitan Intimidation Holds Power

From the book: *"None Dare Call It Deception"*

by Clast Sonomore

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Nicolaitanism

Revelation 2:6

"But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate."

As footnoted in the Scofield Bible, 1967

Nicolaitanism — from *nikao*, "to conquer;" and *laos*, "the people" or "laity." There is no ancient authority for a [geographic] sect of the Nicolaitans. This [term] is [therefore] symbolic, referring to the earliest forms of the notion to provide a "priestly order" or "clergy" which later divided [what can be] an equal brotherhood (Matt. 23:8) into "priests"

and "laity." What in Ephesus was "deeds" (Rev. 2:6) had become a doctrine in Pergamus (Rev. 2:15).

From good authority, I was told that the Southern Baptist convention, at this time representing nearly 10,000,000 members, demanded of the publisher that this footnote be deleted or they would withdraw their support of the Scofield Bible.

It takes no expertise to see the obvious reasons (financial and otherwise) behind the demand of a self-perpetuating hierarchical "*clergy class*" of "*controllers*." This overwhelming desire to hide this Constantinian invention that replaced "a kingdom of priests" with an Old Testament division of these same "priests" into two bodies, "*clergy*" and "*laity*," is basic to Christendom's declining walk "...in the revelation of Him." For whatever reason or reasons, or demands, or threats (to Scofield's publisher or to others), it is needful to record that this very illuminating footnote (along with other comments) has been eliminated from the current volumes. Presumably that little word, "Nicolaitanism, which I [God] also hate" (Rev. 2:6) is currently felt in the contemporary church to be so unimportant that it does not need to be even considered, defined, studied, understood, much less "*hated*" by man ... though it is very much "*hated*" by God.

It's interesting to me that the Scofield Bible is probably the most widely used translation in the "Bible Belt." The most predominant denomination in that region is the Southern Baptists. Could there be a connection between the enforced Nicolaitan agenda by the Southern Baptists and the 50% higher-than-national-average divorce rate in the Bible Belt? I believe there is.

Similarly with the Catholics. In the 1980's the Pope reaffirmed the Nicolaitan

hierarchy to the Catholic clergy worldwide. Today, clergy sexual misconduct headlines the news. Is there a connection? I believe there is.

Sexual misconduct is a surface symptom of a deeper spiritual adultery in which God's Word has been altered to keep a particular class in power, lording over His people. Jesus's criterion for the leadership of His people, however, is a servant's heart of humility. Nicolaitanism prizes personal charisma and cognitive knowledge, not life experience of faithful obedient trust.

Can the curse on Protestant clergy be the 50%+ adultery rate, and on the the Catholic priesthood the pedophilia/ homosexuality? Is the divorce rate of church attendees that exceeds that of the unchurched an accursed outcome of giving in to the unauthorized Nicolaitan power structure? I believe these are all signs of the unfolding judgment on the Nicolaitan system which uses Hellenist practices and Roman organization to maintain dominance.

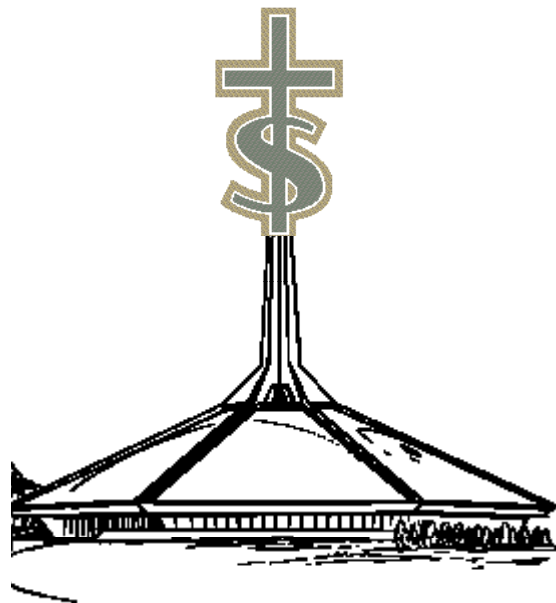
The Hebraic Restoration is having no more success changing Nicolaitanism than Jesus did in changing the power structure of the High Priest or the Sanhedrin. Vested interests of the men who seek prestige in the Nicolaitan system keep it from being changed. It must always intimidate and falsely accuse those who embrace the Hebraic foundations our Father established for His children.

To those who are enamored with the Nicolaitan system, weigh this paraphrase of Gamaliel's warning to the Sanhedrin as you try to discredit those who proclaim the freedom due the priesthood of **all** believers: *"Therefore, in the present case I advise you:*

Leave these men alone! Let them go! Their purpose or activity is not of human origin, and it will not fail. It is from God, and you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God" (Acts 5:38,39).

"It is from God, and you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God."

Clergy Rule
Satan's Bullseye



The Nicolaitan Steeple