

The Church of the Living God: Introduction; The Authority Structure of the Church Age: the Written Word, 1 Tim 3:14; the Spoken Word, v. 15

THE CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD

THE PREMIER BIBLE CLASSES AT

Grace Doctrine Church
1821 SOUTH RIVER ROAD
ST. CHARLES, MISSOURI

SUNDAY, AUGUST 17, 2008

1. INTRODUCTION:

Today marks the fulfillment of an effort that began exactly six years ago with comments I made to this congregation in August 2002 when we were meeting at Chesterfield Day School.

Our first official act following this presentation was to visit Lafayette Bible Church on Big Bend Road. It did not live up to our expectations and was voted down at a subsequent congregational meeting. But it put in motion a process that has led us to this moment. What you see here today is the result of an ongoing sequence of events during which the grace of God has been made manifest to all that have observed the process. Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to Grace Doctrine Church at 1821 South River Road in St. Charles, Missouri. Welcome to Our Own Place!

Chesterfield Day School is now a memory. We were graced out by God to have it for 33 years but grateful for this facility that will serve the St. Louis area as headquarters for doctrinal teaching for many years to come.

We leave behind us plays, book fairs, banquets, fund raisers, and graduations that interrupted our momentum. And we also leave behind the Shadow People, those silhouettes that guarded the outer perimeter of our bivouac for over three decades.

As a salute to my service at Chesterfield Day School as pastor of Grace Doctrine, our daughter, Shannon, has written me a poem which I think appropriate to share with you this morning.

For Daddy

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Twenty-three years under your pastoral belt,
It's time to start fresh and new;
A place of your own;
Brick, mortar, and stone:
A house of God, teaching His Truth.

The school was a great place for decades and more;
We're grateful for its provision by Grace.



But how grand and excitin',
To have a building to reside in:
Grace Doctrine Church has a new face.

Your family has pride as we've stood by your side;
Your congregants, loyal and true.
As you leave Chesterfield
A loss you may feel,
For there's someone who can't go with you.

Week after week, year after year,
Through hundreds and thousands of classes,
We knew they'd be there
At the Shadow People we'd stare,
Bright-colored paint lads and paint lasses.

At first they were strange and a little distracting;
The kids on the gymnasium wall.
And then before long
They became a part of our throng;
Familiar and consistent, one and all.

As you taught every line and built every precept
To the Shadow People our eyes would be drawn.
Now the walls will be beige
Around pulpit and stage;
No more Kodachrome kids—we've moved on.

Somehow they'll be missed, these forms frozen in time;
Their presence we'll never forget.
So here to remind you
Is a friend to stand by you:
A rainbow-hued tot silhouette.

The end of an era for our little church;
A bright blessed future we see.
But we pause to look back
With a tip of our hat
To the Shadow People: Thanks for the memories.

That era is indeed long gone and we begin that bright new future in a brand new church. I am pleased to announce that we were able to complete construction \$115,000 under budget and as a result the church is paid for without the need to borrow any money. However, I am told by our treasurer Dan Hunt that the church only has 40-thousand dollars left but the Lord got us here and I therefore have confidence He will keep us here.

There are several people who need to be mentioned whose coordination enabled us to enter this building debt free: the sharp eyes of Dan Hunt and Lou Basso who managed the budget for the church; the good work of Wachter, Inc., which found ways to do things under budget. Its owner and general contractor, Mark Kamp, his son and project manager Brian Kamp, and project supervisor, Chris King, each found ways to help us. It was very thoughtful of Wachter to send for our enjoyment the beautiful floral arrangement here on the rostrum and the planter in the foyer. Two other men need to be mentioned: Alan Blair from CCS Group for his work in project management and last but certainly not least, our long-time Dorito, friend, and colleague and architect for the project, Richard Hays. No one saved us as much money as did Richard since he provided his services pro bono.

Today I want to begin our history here with a series that takes under consideration the local church. It is home base for every Church Age believer. This study will examine, all too briefly, the institution of the local church, the duties of the pastor and congregation, and the authority structure within the body of Christ.

Our central passage is 1 Timothy 3:14-16 with emphasis on verse 15.

2. THE AUTHORITY STRUCTURE OF THE CHURCH AGE:

There are three types of authority mentioned by Paul in 1 Timothy 3:14-16. In verse 14, the authority of the written Word, in verse 15, the authority of the spoken Word, and in verse 16, the authority of the Living Word.

A. THE AUTHORITY OF THE WRITTEN WORD:

1 Timothy 3:14 - I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you before long;

1. Paul begins this section with the clause, "I am writing these things to you ..."
2. "These things" refer to what he has written so far in the First Epistle to Timothy. He has communicated doctrines important to Timothy's position as pastor-teacher at the church at Ephesus.
3. This Epistle became a part of the New Testament canon. Thus, when Paul begins this verse with the present active indicative of the verb **γράφω, graphō** we are reminded that what he writes is divine revelation under the principle of inspiration:

God so supernaturally directed the writers of Scripture that, without waving their human intelligence, their individuality, their literary style, their personality, their personal feelings, or any other human factor, His own complete and coherent message to man was recorded with perfect accuracy in the original languages of Scripture, the very words bearing the authority of divine authorship.

4. The present tense of *graphō* is pictorial which presents to the mind a picture of events as in the process of occurrence.
5. The event that is in process is the principle of inspiration. The active voice indicates this is an action produced by Paul under the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The indicative mood means the content of what he writes is absolute truth.
6. The prepositional phrase "to you" means that the first recipient was Timothy, but since it is also divine revelation it is intended for the entire royal family.
7. Paul continues by indicating he has a confident expectation of coming to Ephesus and meeting with Timothy face-to-face in a short time.
8. What he writes to Timothy carries the authority of divine revelation and thus becomes a part of God's policies to believers in the Church Age.

1 Timothy 3:14 - These things I am writing to you, though with absolute confidence I will come face-to-face with you very soon.

B. THE AUTHORITY OF THE SPOKEN WORD:

1 Timothy 3:15 - but in case I am delayed, I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.

1. The opening phrase, "In case I am delayed," is the protasis of a third class condition which indicates that there is a high probability that he will be delayed.
2. Paul writes the Epistle so that if his trip to Ephesus is delayed, Timothy will have necessary and needful information to assist him in dealing with problems in his congregation.
3. His writing has a purpose, indicated by the conjunction **ἵνα, hina**, translated "in order that," or "for the purpose that."
4. The purpose is stated next by the perfect active subjunctive of the verb **οἶδα, oida**: "that you may know."
 - perfect: Consummative: It does not indicate an existing state but a consummated process. Paul is writing Timothy doctrinal principles that he must study, learn, and apply as pastor of his church. The process for achieving this is the Grace System of Learning.
 - active: Timothy must inculcate doctrine from this Epistle so that he can develop an inventory powerful enough to combat the false doctrine of the Judaizers who had infiltrated his church.
 - subjunctive: Indicates a future element of contingency based on Timothy's volitional response Paul's teaching.
5. There are some major issues confronting Timothy at Ephesus, therefore this Epistle is intended to give him guidance on how to manage them. Two issues were primary: (1) to confront those who are in opposition to sound doctrine and (2) church order, including qualifications for those in authority.
6. Timothy is to learn divine policy regarding these and other subjects by studying this Epistle, therefore he writes "for the purpose that you may know."
7. What Timothy is to know is introduced next: "how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God."