

State of the Church 2018

1 Timothy 3:14-16

Stuart W. Bryan

I. Year in Review (cf. Acts 2:42)

These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly; but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. [By common confession] great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory. (1 Timothy 3:14-16)

II. By common confession

A. Timothy's ministerial calling

There are “_____” in the world, there are appropriate ways to conduct oneself, because the world in which we live is not our own. *The earth is the Lord and everything in it; the world, and all who live upon it (Ps 24:1).*

B. Who are we?

1. House of God

The place where Timothy labors is the *house of God*. Timothy is a servant in God's dwelling place; the place where God lives and makes Himself known. The term “*house of God*” is used throughout the OT to refer to the _____ of God. Because it is the *house of God*, it must operate according to His rules, His law.

Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy.” (1 Pet 1:13-16)

2. Church of the Living God

The place where Timothy labors is the *church of the living God*. The word *church* comes from the Greek word *ekklesia*, which means the “_____ out ones”. The Church consists of all those whom God has called out of the mass of humanity and separated unto Himself. All those who bear the Name of Christ have been summoned out of the world to worship and serve the living God.

The word “*church*” evokes the first promise of the Gospel in the Garden of Eden. “*I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed. He shall crush your head, and you shall bruise his heel*” (Gen 3:15). God, in His grace and mercy, promised to rescue a people through a Seed of the woman, Jesus. He promised to call a people out of the world and to bring them to Himself.

Between the Church and the world there is a gulf fixed. *I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed.* God establishes an antithesis, a sharp divide, between His own people and those whom He leaves in the power of the wicked one.

What this means is that the Church is to be characterized but an unrelenting opposition to the world. *Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God* (James 4:4).

3. Pillar and Support of the Truth

Finally, the place where Timothy labors is the *pillar and support of the truth*. The responsibility of the church is to hold up and exalt the truth in the world. Timothy is obligated to preach the *truth* not *his opinions*. He is to preach Christ. He is to devote Himself to the truth, to the Word of God!

C. What is our calling?

Timothy’s central obligation is to make God and His truth known in the earth. And this is our central obligation as well. We are to make common confession.

This is precisely what Paul implies in verse 16 which begins with an unusual Greek word, *homologoumenos*. It is a participle that joins two Greek words meaning *confessing the same thing*. So the NASB translates: *By common confession great is the mystery of godliness:*

- *God was manifested in the flesh*
- *Justified in the Spirit*
- *Seen by angels –*
- *Preached among the Gentiles –*
- *Believed on in the world –*
- *Received up in glory –*

III. Conclusion