

Letter to a Pastor

THE FOLLOWING LETTER WAS SENT from a church member to a pastor after he asked the assembly to begin calling him by his first name (rather than the more formal Pastor so-and-so or Bro. so-and-so). We believe this letter provides a poignant example of how the clergy system perpetuates a sense of inferiority among church members and puts distance between them and their spiritual shepherds. The small step of eliminating positional titles (which Jesus forbade anyway, see Matthew 23:8-11) enabled this sister to break free from her inhibitions and begin relating to her leaders as fellow-believers rather than members of a spiritually elite clergy-class.

Dear Wayne,

Thank you for following the Lord's call to make some changes in our church. Because you have been willing to go beyond the customary, we are experiencing new liberty and power. I personally have been bound by feelings of inferiority in the church. This was not so much due to anyone's treatment of me as it was because of my holding onto the shame of my past. For the past two years, I have felt that I really had no right to pray for anyone at the altar, that I was not worth my pastor's time, that I should refer anyone interested in the church to the "clergy."

All this time, I have felt like my divorce, remarriage, and disobedience to my pastor have been written on my forehead -- that everyone who looks at me sees only those things. You have taught me enough that I know where these thoughts have their origin, but it has been so hard to break free from them. Simple things like getting rid of the titles and having the ministers come off the platform have helped me to realize that we are all of equal worth in Christ. We are all just real people saved by the grace of God. I so appreciate that you are willing to break out of church traditions so that we all can realize the power we are given by the Holy Ghost. I am now much better able to see the goals ahead of me and to "forget that which is behind."

Thank you for your time. God bless you!

Melissa