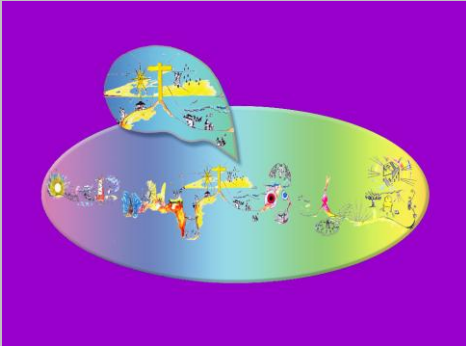


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We believe in one GOD, in three persons; FATHER, SON and HOLY SPIRIT. We regard the Bible (both Hebrew Bible and New Testament) as the only infallible authoritative WORD OF GOD.

HULDAH MINISTRY aims to return to the Word Of God, founded on Hebrew background and to interpret it from Hebraic perspective, acknowledging that Jesus is a Jew and the Jewish-ness of His teaching as a continuation from the Hebrew Bible. The Ministry also aims to put His teaching into practice, to have a closer relationship with the Lord, Jesus Christ, and to regularly have a Christian fellowship so that this-worldly kingdom of God will materialise in the midst of the followers of Jesus here and now, as well as earnestly seeking Christ's Return to establish the otherworldly Kingdom of God on earth.

All activities are free of charge and no obligation whatever. Just enjoy our fellowship!

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HULDAH MINISTRY

LETTER TO THE BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST

【"EMERGING CHURCH": MAN-MADE THOUGHTS AND METHODS ADOPTED IN CHURCH】

The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.

In the heavens he has pitched a tent for the sun, which is like a bridegroom coming forth from his pavilion, like a champion rejoicing to run his course. It rises at one end of the heavens and makes its circuit to the other; nothing is hidden from its heat.

The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes. The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring for ever. The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous. They are more precious than gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb. By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.

Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults. Keep your servant also from wilful sins; may they not rule over me. Then will I be blameless, innocent of great transgression.

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.

PSALM 19.

This psalm is one of the most beautiful and memorable psalms. It praises the Lord's saving acts which are reflected in His creation and His law.

There are three voices represented in this Psalm of David, which speak of God; the voice of the heavens, the voice of the law, and the voice of God's servant. Among the skies the sun is the representative and without speech, declares the Maker's glory to all inhabitants on earth, not to be worshipped itself. After the first voice, the voice of the law starts speaking, which comprehends all that God wants us to know about Himself. The psalmist David uses four further different terms for the law; statutes, precepts commands, ordinances. All of them are for him ***'more precious than gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb'***. The servant of the Lord who has a right relationship with Him and wants to be kept from willful sins so as to ***'be blameless, innocent of great transgression'*** is the one that intently hears the first two voices and understands God rightly. He acknowledges his sin, particularly in his speech.

This psalm is very articulate in showing the importance of the knowledge of God's law. But for it, man cannot understand God fully. In other words, when it comes to how God makes Himself known, there are two self-revelations; general revelation and special revelation. The former is "the knowledge of God and his will which is given to mankind as a whole through nature, conscience, and history" according to J.J. Davis. The latter is "the knowledge of God and his will which is given to Israel and the early church and recorded in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments" (J.J. Davis). The apostle Paul, in the context that he claims that no-one has an excuse for honouring God because the whole world reveals the Creator God, puts it: ***'The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities -his eternal power and divine nature- have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse' (Romans 1:18-20).***

Psalm 19:1-6 describes 'the book of creation', i.e., general revelation and 19:7-14 describes 'the book of Covenant', i.e., special revelation. Significantly, the psalmist distinguishes the two parts by using different terms for Deity; in the first part, Deity is called "el", 'God' in English, and in the second part, "Yahweh", 'the LORD' in English is used. When we look at the stars, the trees, the flowers, the seas, the mountains and the rivers we know God's sovereign rule over nature. The world reveals God and everything exists to reflect His glorious nature. Psalm 104 is another wonderful psalm that celebrates God's created world. It proclaims that stability, fruitfulness, order, variety, and renewal are God's perfect provision for His creation. Especially the following passage promises God's sovereign care for the earth. Why do we fear earth's resources running out when the Spirit of God constantly renews and replenishes it? ***'These all look to you to give them their food at the proper time. When you give it to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are satisfied with good things. When you hide your face, they are terrified; when you take away their breath, they die and return to the dust. When you send your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth.'*** (Ps.104:27-30)

However, general revelation alone is not enough because the voice of His world, the visible cosmos to everyone can only tell us about God, the Creator. We need to listen to His Word, the voice of His law to know the fact that He is also "Yahweh", the LORD, the Redeemer. We need to be appropriately instructed to know God not only through the physical light of the sun but also the spiritual light of the divine commandments. Unless we understand our God as both Creator and Redeemer, through both general and special revelations, our knowledge about God would not be perfect and we may be easily tempted to be led to other gods by yet another voice of the tempter. Actually, the Bible tells us of the fact that it happened to the first man and woman. God first created the heavens and the earth and all the creatures. Then He orally gave man a law. If he obeyed God's commands His blessing would have been ensured for him. But man was easily seduced by the tempter, the devil. If Adam and Eve were very serious about keeping His

commands and much more informed of the law, and both ‘God, the Creator’ and the ‘LORD, the Redeemer’, they would not have so easily fallen into the illusory gratifications of sin. Only when the psalmist has acquired knowledge of God through both revelations; the material and the moral realms, was he rightly convicted of his sinfulness. He then meditated upon the revealed will of Yahweh and turned to prayer for absolute cleansing from hidden faults, willful sins and great transgression. Thus this Psalm tells us the importance of a close relationship with God. Just knowing creation, redemption and His Word is not enough. A continual desire of cleansing and of maintaining a clear conscience through His Word would inevitably turn us to the dependence on and obedience to the Lord, because the Lord alone can thoroughly cleanse our lives and prevent us from falling into proud and impulsive sins. This psalmist’s attitude towards the Lord should be followed by the believers in Christ as well, to enjoy the fullness of life and to pursue His way to the end.

Recently I have come across a newly coined word the “emerging church”, which seems to represent one of the fashions in the latest Christian era according to the supporters of such a novel trend. We are living in a time when Christianity has been seeking how far we can stray from biblical standards and the Word, and still remain as sound Christian witnesses to Christ Jesus and His gospel. As Paul prophesied, we seem to be already deeply involved in such a critical trend. ***‘The Spirit clearly says that in the later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons’ (1Ti.4:1), and ‘For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desire, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears way from the truth and turn aside to myths’ (2 Ti.4:3-4, Line added).***

To have a right relationship with God, obeying God and His Word is a must as the psalmist depicted. However, if the Word is replaced by something new, some new methodology, what will take place? It is said that enthusiasm for methods and means that facilitated church growth has for several decades characterised Christianity and while the seeker-friendly era was successful in bringing a generation of baby-boomers to Jesus, over the past number years it has radically been replaced by new innovative methods, responding to the fast-changing culture. Conforming to the secular movement where more people have been hungry than ever to discover and develop the spiritual dimension of their lives, and interested in Eastern thoughts, New Age transcendental experiences and mysticism, seeking for symbols, signs and wonders, the supporters of the idea of “emerging church” claim that the church for the future must be more sensual and experience-based. Dan Kimball calls it “Vintage Christianity” in his book entitled in *‘The Emerging church: Vintage Christianity for New Generations’*. The recent trend of Christianity seems to have changed its goal into experience-based, instead of Bible-based living, despite Christ’s clear teaching: ***‘If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free’ (Jn.8:31-32)***. Those that feel apprehensive about this movement are not few in numbers, knowing that such deviation from the Word of God for extra-biblical experience can open the door to deception, while admitting the supporters’ sincere efforts to evangelise the postmodern generation who was raised without any Christian influence and who has daily been exposed to tempting, experience-oriented new religions such as New Age, Eastern mysticism and spiritual enlightenment.

According to a commentary by Roger Oakland, Dan Kimball lists a number of suggestions to encourage believers and unbelievers in emerging culture to experience God in worship. Some of them are: 1. Services designed to be user-friendly and contemporary must change to services that are designed to be experiential and spiritual-mystical. 2. Stained-glass that was taken out of churches and replaced with video screens should now be brought back into the church on video screens. 3. Lit up and cheery sanctuaries need to be darkened because darkness is valued and displays a sense of spirituality. 4. The focal point of the service that was the sermon must be changed so that the focal point of the service is a holistic experience. 5. Use of modern

technology that was used to communicate with a contemporary flare must change so that church attendees can experience the ancient and mystical (and use technology to do so). If this idea comes to be adopted by the majority, its consequence must be terrible, where only external-conscious, self-centred but not God-centred worship will be performed. Roger Oakland puts it: ‘While purpose-driven evangelists removed crosses and other Christian symbols from church services to be seeker-friendly, the Postmodern generation... apparently are attracted to crosses, candles, stained-glass, liturgy, and sacraments. According to Julie Sevig, in an article called “Ancient new” ...Postmoderns prefer to encounter Christ by using all their senses. That’s part of the appeal of classical liturgical or contemplative worship: the incense and candles, making the sign of the cross, the taste and smell of the bread and wine, touching icons and being anointed with oil...Postmoderns want a God they can feel, taste, touch, hear and smell-a full sensory immersion in the divine’. Roger Oakland argues that the “emerging church” of the present era and the church that emerged after the New Testament was written are one and the same. Would Paul’s apprehension not be recalled: ***‘I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them’ (Acts 20:29-30)?*** He explicitly puts it: ‘While Rick Warren, Dan Kimball and Dr. Robert Webber and others may be excited about the “Emerging Church” and the direction it is presently headed, I am concerned the “Emerging Church” may actually be a re-emergence of what has already occurred in church history. If the pattern continues expect to see evangelical Protestants become more and more Roman Catholic...A Christianity that is not based on the Scriptures is a false Christianity. It may be ecumenical and it may successful in attracting numbers, but it is not biblical. It could even lead people to believe, but instead they follow false teachers and false doctrine and are deceived.’ (www.understandthetimes.org)

While most Christians believe that healthy church growth should be founded upon God’s Word alone, there have already been numbers of market-driven and purpose-driven churches based on man-made methods spreading worldwide. In such churches reinterpreted Scriptures is said to be used for the purpose of making the Word more acceptable and more understandable by altering the Word itself. Roger Oakland shows an example, quoting a new paraphrased version of the Bible authored by Eugene Peterson, known as “*The Message*”, which describes itself as “contemporary rendering of the Bible from the original language, crafted to present its tone, rhythm, events, and ideas in everyday language”. He puts it: ‘For example, consider the following portion of Scripture taken from John 3:17 –“that the world through him might be saved.” Peterson’s rendering reads: “He came to help, to put the world right again.” It does not take a biblical scholar to understand that “saved” means that we can be redeemed from the judgment we deserve for our sins so that we can go to heaven. It should be obvious that using “help” instead of “saved” completely distorts the meaning of what Jesus said. And “to put the world right again” has nothing to do with the salvation of souls. In fact this sounds like the social gospel to reform the world through political action. Rick Warren, the author of *The Purpose Driven Church*, is a strong supporter of Eugene Peterson’s message. While Warren claims he quotes the Bible when he quotes *The Message* he is not quoting the Bible. He is quoting the thoughts of some man who thinks he is stating what the Bible states...If you want the truth and all the truth, read the Bible – not some man’s conjecture about what he thinks God has said. Otherwise you have the potential of committing spiritual suicide.’

In the Hebrew Bible, i.e., Old Testament, ‘law’ is a comprehensive word, which means all that God wants us to know about Himself and He has given it to His people to reveal Himself more precisely after the creation. God’s law, His Word itself is right, radiant and perfect, reviving the soul, trustworthy, making the wise simple, giving joy to the heart, and giving light to the eyes, as examined at the beginning in this letter. We needn’t add anything to God given self-revelations in order to know Him.