

Authorized to change Worship and Organization

As a Rabbi, Jesus had to observe cultural expectations in order to keep the respect of His disciples and not to be dismissed as a fraud. Observing, leading normal worship was necessary. Everyone knew the established forms.

The Lord God commanded worship on the last day of the week. Jesus personally was the only person who could have authorized the change to the first day of the week. Only the Lord, Messiah, Son of God, Himself, could change the command of God. When something is obvious, it does not have to be said. People get out of the way of fire and trains. It is not necessary for the Scriptures to record Jesus command to change the day of worship. There is no possible alternative.

Jesus also must have authorized and taught changes in the synagog worship they had grown up with. Matthew 16:19. "Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."¹ Binding and loosing is a standard statement in Jesus' day. It dealt with practical issues. Over the centuries Christian scholars have forgotten the original meaning.

Practical issues: "What do we do now about . . . ? All groups in order to stay together have to deal with certain matters in the same way. Worship is a prime example. There can be no "worship" if everyone is doing their own thing at the same time. There can be no group if there is no structure to organize and direct group tasks. The Children of Abraham, the Jews, are one people, one group. They have been able, sort of, to maintain a common core practice.

God made people of every language, tribe and nation, all different. In Christ, He calls them to become one body with many different members. There can be no ONE WAY that fits everyone for all time. Jesus authorized binding and loosing, establishing forms that fit current local situations. The fact that God in heaven agrees with the form and regulation does not mean that they can not be changed when necessary.

Christian people and leaders maintain the truths and practices of their Lord Jesus, Son of God. They can not deviate from what they had received, the faith of the Apostolic, Catholic - Universal, Church without leaving that Faith. There is variation in worship: Eastern Orthodox, Western Roman Catholic, Coptic, Protestant, Oriental - Thomist, Congregational, Charismatic. and more. Almost universal are songs/ psalms, confession/ absolution, Scripture readings, creeds, Prayer of the Church, The Lord's Prayer, Offerings, Communion with bread and wine. Most share the same pattern/ structure. There are leaders and worshippers. This can be seen by some as great diversity from their own practice. Or it can be seen as amazing similarity, the same body wearing different clothes. One Holy Church: Unam Sanctam Ecclesiam.

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Binding_and_loosing.

The early Church adopted different forms from the Temple and synagog worship. Early creeds replaced the Shema, the Kyrie in its long form replaced the Aleinu and the Prayer of the Church, the Amidah. Kyrie eleison is Greek. It was kept in the Latin Mass and maintained into the 20th century by the liturgical Lutherans, Anglicans and more. Even the Coptic Church keeps the Greek Kyrie eleison. Synagog worship is nearly unchanged to this day, rigid, rooted in Hebrew and centered on the leader. Church worship usually is more open to change, has more congregational involvement and uses the popular language. There is strong desire in some groups to maintain the most ancient practices. They value the unchanging eternal nature of God. Some groups value the active dynamic God. They seek to experience God's transforming Spirit in new worship form. No one way fits everyone.

Organizational forms also have wide variety, from hierarchical to congregational, from local to denominational ownership, control and oversight. In some places the Church and the Government are a unified organization. Leadership training ranges from apprenticeship to formal instruction. The normal flux and change over the years, schisms and reunifications, conditions requires organizational changes. "Binding and Loosing" allows for those. It authorizes modifications.

The first recorded example of this is the Apostolic Council in Acts 15. They had a practical question. What do Gentiles have to do to be considered Christians? Some said they first, also, had to become Jews following the established Pharisees' procedure for proselytes, circumcision and adherence to the whole Jewish Torah rulings. The Council exercised the authority to bind and loose.

All this diversity is disorganized. That seems wrong to some. They would like to see one Christian Church Organization, that would demonstrate the unity of the Church. God's ways are always better. Any organization can be corrupted, misused. They are based on human power. Satan would love that. The real Unity of the Church is spiritual. It is expressed spiritually and seen spiritually. Those with eyes to see, see and rejoice in that unity. It also means that while Satan can attack and corrupt pieces for a time, the whole Church cannot be overcome. The whole is stronger than the members.

Since God is Love and the Gospel is Love, the nature of the Christian life is love. The abiding presence of the Spirit of Christ, His salvation, is seen, witnessed, effected by the love of all the members for one another. "By this all men will see you are my disciples, by your love for one another." John 13:35

To God alone be Glory

See my web site for more. <http://thesignofconcord.com> Email ConcordDove@mac.com

Stephen H. Funck April 24, 2021.

He died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves,
but for him who died and was raised for them. 2 Cor. 5:15

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