

Titles Are Unbiblical in the Church

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Author: Christopher J. E. Johnson

Updated: Mar, 31, 2016

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It is so common for church-goers in church-buildings to call one another by flattering titles. "Reverend so-n-so," "Pastor so-n-so," "Brother so-n-so," "Sister so-n-so," "Elder so-n-so," "Deacon so-n-so," and the titles go on and on. Yet, if we look carefully throughout the New Testament, we'll find most of these titles non-existent, and only one used in an extremely rare circumstance. It is the world that loves the titles, and sadly, many Christians have adopted the habits of the world and pagan religion in their use of titles.

We often must be careful about quoting from the book of Job, as Job and his three friends spoke many foolish things they called wisdom, but in chapter 32, Elihu, the fourth friend, spoke up and rebuked them all.

Let me not, I pray you, accept any man's person, neither let me give flattering titles unto man. For I know not to give flattering titles; in so doing my maker would soon take me away.
-Job 32:21-22

So what is a title in the context of men? Josiah was looking at the sepulchers, and found one in particular:

Then he said, What title is that that I see? And the men of the city told him, It is the sepulchre of the man of God, which came from Judah, and proclaimed these things that thou hast done against the altar of Bethel.
-2 Kings 23:17

So based on the context, a title is an identification or label describing the person or persons.

title (n): an name of dignity, distinction or pre-eminence given to persons

(See 'title', American Dictionary of the English Language, Noah Webster, 1828, retrieved Dec 24, 2014 [webstersdictionary1828.com])

And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS.
-John 19:19

So a title is an extension of one's own name, and although our Lord Jesus Christ is worthy of all glorifying names, it's interesting that He did not use them for himself. Rather, Christ asked the Apostles who He was for their confession of faith.

He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.
-Matthew 16:15-16

Let's look at the title of "reverend" for a moment because this is a title that is commonly used in the U.S. today. I've heard this title verbally used by many born-again Christians, but most of them don't realize that is completely unbiblical.

He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name.
-Psalm 111:9

In the Bible, there is only one who is called "reverend" in description, and that is the Lord God. In the spiritual sense, within the Body of Christ, God is the only one we give reverence towards.

Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:
-Hebrews 12:28

Thus, when someone is called "reverend," he is given a title that belongs to God alone. When a man allows himself to be called "reverend," he is allowing himself to be given flattering titles.

holy (adj): perfect in a moral sense; pure in heart, temper or dispositions; free from sin and sinful afflictions

(See 'holy', American Dictionary of the English Language, Noah Webster, 1828, retrieved Dec 24, 2014 [webstersdictionary1828.com])

Using the name "Bob Smith," if a man was introduced as "The Holy Bob Smith," immediately, red flags should go up in every Christian's mind to beware of this man because he is allowing himself to be called by a description that is given the Lord God, and Him *ALONE*. **No born-again Christian would ever describe himself as 'holy'**, otherwise there was no reason for Jesus Christ to die for our sin in the first place.

reverend (adj): worthy of reverence; entitled to respect mingled with fear and affection

(See 'reverend', American Dictionary of the English Language, Noah Webster, 1828, retrieved Dec 24, 2014 [webstersdictionary1828.com])

revere [reverence] (v): to regard with respect tinged with awe; venerate

(See 'revere', Random House Dictionary, Random House Inc, 2013; See also Collins English Dictionary, 10th Edition, William Collins Sons & Co, 2009)

And so the man who uses the title of "reverend," and allows others to call him "reverend," expect others to look upon himself, speak to himself, and regard himself in awe, as a holy being, that all others will be in fear of his holiness.

The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe.

-Proverbs 29:25

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.

-Proverbs 9:10

As with all titles, "reverend" is a title of pride, creating a god-like status for oneself, and that's how a lot of cults get started. As a man become more and more "revered," he begins to think that every word he speaks is directly from the mouth of God, when in reality, what they teach is often unbiblical and void of discernment, and they almost never allow themselves to be rebuked and corrected.

For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.

-Isaiah 66:2

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

-Proverbs 1:7

The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.

-Proverbs 8:13



God is not looking to "reverends." He is looking to those that fear Him and humble themselves before Him in spirit of truth and confession and shakes in fear at the very Word of the Lord. God looks to those who give reverence to His Word.

The fact is that this tradition of calling someone 'reverend', as most wicked traditions in American church-buildings, comes from Rome. Catholics use titles of "Reverend," "Very Reverend," and "The Most Reverend." It's not hard to see why priests, bishops, and popes of the Catholic church are called 'reverend' when we see them parade

themselves around, welcoming the worship and fear of men in honor of themselves.

Catholics even give the title of "Reverend" to women on occasion:

"Sister Mary Angelica... Rome allowed her--despite her young age--to become an Abbess of a new monastery, and Our Lady of the Holy Angels opened on May 20, 1962, just ten months from its groundbreaking. (Upon becoming Abbess, she received the title of respect of 'Reverend Mother' or just 'Mother' for short."

-Rev. John Trigilio & Rev. Kenneth Brighenti, *Catholicism for Dummies*, John Wiley & Sons, 2011, ISBN: 9781118053782; Read "Can Women Teach in Church?" here at creationliberty.com for more details.

Though women are given the responsibility to reverence her husband in the marriage ([Eph 5:33](#)), it doesn't say that she is to go to her friends and neighbors and give them reverence too. Outside of a woman's God-given position and commandment in a marriage, men are not to be revered in the spiritual church of the Lord Jesus Christ because we, as a church, are in a marriage with the Lord Jesus Christ ([Rom 7:4](#)), and so we give reverence to Him, and Him alone, just as the woman gives reverence to her husband, and him alone.

When the New Testament Scriptures speak of giving "reverence" in the church, it is to the Lord God. Even in Hebrews 12, which some will use as an excuse to be called "Reverend," asks a question concerning this point:

Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?

-Hebrews 12:9

So some folks will say it's okay to give pastors reverence, but if they would keep reading the chapter, there is a different conclusion:

Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:

-Hebrews 12:28

It is to God and Him alone we give reverence to in the spiritual Body of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ is no respecter of persons:

Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:

-Acts 10:34

But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.

-James 2:9

In Catholicism, the "Reverend" title is applied in the following ways:

Reverend: Priests ('Father'), Mother Superiors, Mother Generals

Very Reverend: Papal Chamberlains

Right Reverend: Protonotaries Apostolics, Domestic Prelates, Vicars Generals, Abbots

Most Reverend: Bishops, Archbishops, Patriarchs, Latin Titulars, Nuncios

His Holiness: The Pope



REVEREND

The hypocritical art of calling the pride in yourself "self-esteem," while calling it "conceit" when you see it in others. (Luk 16:15)

They're building themselves up, getting more and more holy, until they become "god" themselves. The term "vicar" is of Latin origin which means "substitute," so as "vicars of Christ," the priests actually believe they are Christ-on-earth.

(The Roman Catholic heathen Mother Teresa believed the same thing, that Jesus could not come unless through a priest. Read "Wolves in Costume: Mother Teresa" here at creationliberty.com for more details.)

And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.

-Luke 16:15

The early churches formed by the Apostles of Christ did not use titles, and after seeing all the usage of titles today in American church-buildings, I can see why. With titles comes an automatic respect to their person, which the Bible condemns as sin.

My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons.
-James 2:1

(Read "Why Are Christian Respecting Persons?" here at creationliberty.com for more details.)

Concerning the term "apostle," the Apostles of Christ were referred to as "apostles" many times, but they were *NEVER* called "Apostle so-n-so" as a title. Let's look at Paul for example:

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,
-Romans 1:1

Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;)
-Galatians 1:1

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus our brother,
-Colossians 1:1

Again, Paul was never addressed as, nor called himself, "Apostle Paul," but rather, he said he was called to be an apostle. Likewise, you'll notice that nowhere in the New Testament is anyone in the church called "Pastor so-n-so," "Bishop so-n-so," "Elder so-n-so," "Prophet so-n-so," "Deacon so-n-so," etc, so if they didn't do it in the New Testament, why are so many pastors defending their titles with such fervor?

<p>It is not unbiblical to be a pastor, it is not unbiblical to be called a pastor, but it unbiblical to title oneself as "Pastor so-n-so."</p>

There is one place in the New Testament where "Brother" is used:

And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.
-Acts 9:17

This was used under an extremely unique circumstance; not just in everyday conversation. This was before Saul was called "Paul," and Ananias had never met him before.

And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do... And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.
-Acts 9:6-9

When Saul was converted on the road to Damascus, he was blinded by God for three days, and told to go into the city. He wasn't given any instructions, but to wait for them in the city, and God would have someone meet with him, namely, Ananias.

And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.
-Acts 9:6-9

Ananias was told that Saul had been converted, and he was to approach him, and lay hands on Saul so he could get his sight back. Then Ananias approached him declaring him "Brother Saul" as a new convert to the faith of Jesus Christ. This is not used as a title, but as a declaration of Paul's conversion, as well as a declaration of who Ananias was to a man who had no sight.

But today, we have church-goers everywhere who use the titles "Brother so-n-so" and "Sister so-n-so" nonchalantly without any thought to it. Certainly, those who are born-again in Christ Jesus are brethren (brothers and sisters), but there

is no need to give them a title. In fact, I have witnessed many church-goers refer to an unsaved person as a brother or sister, but if they are false converts, then it's a lie, and we need to be careful what comes out of our mouths.

- How many people are given the title "pastor," but aren't really pastors of Christ?
- How many people are given the title "deacon," but aren't really deacons according to Scripture?
- How many people are given the title "elder," but they are leading a leavened/false church-building?

Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

-Colossians 2:8

There are many people today that are being spoiled via training into respecting persons through traditional titles.

Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.

-Mark 7:13

Consider Romans 16, which is almost never mentioned by those who love their titles so much. Paul addresses many in the church, but never gives them a title:

I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea:

-Romans 16:1

Notice that he called Phebe a sister, but did not give her a title. He continues to greet many in the church, but does not address them with titles:

Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us. Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellowprisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me. Greet Amplias my beloved in the Lord. Salute Urbane, our helper in Christ, and Stachys my beloved. Salute Apelles approved in Christ. Salute them which are of Aristobulus' household. Salute Herodion my kinsman. Greet them that be of the household of Narcissus, which are in the Lord.

-Romans 16:6-11

No one is addressed as "brother-so-n-so" or "sister-so-n-so" or "pastor so-n-so," but church-goers, and pastors especially, make every unbiblical excuse they can to hold on to the prestige of their tradition. Speaking of pastors love of respect, let's take a look at Diotrephes, who loved something called 'preeminence':

I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not.

-3 John 1:9

preeminent (adj): superior in excellence; distinguished for something commendable or honorable

(See 'pre-eminent', American Dictionary of the English Language, Noah Webster, 1828, retrieved Dec 24, 2014 [webstersdictionary1828.com])

eminent (adj): high; lofty; as an eminent place; exalted in rank; high in office; dignified; distinguished

(See 'eminent', American Dictionary of the English Language, Noah Webster, 1828, retrieved Dec 24, 2014 [webstersdictionary1828.com])

Diotrephes loved to have others look up to him for his moral virtues and high rank, and because of this, he did not receive the disciples of Christ, who would teach the truth about pride and lofty traditions of men. Most of those who take on the title of "pastor" do so to establish to all men they speak to that they have some great authority in the church, but Jesus Christ they were supposed to be meek, and minister unto others.

But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

-Matthew 20:25-28

Those in our government do all things for the purpose to be seen among men, and understandably so, since that's their job. However, church leadership is not supposed to be like them.

Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not. For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.

-Matthew 23:7-11

Like Diotrephes, many pastors love to be called pastor because they know it's a quick title they can use to get instant respect. This is no different than someone who calls themselves a "reverend."

I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church.

-3 John 1:9-10

Those that have that love of title in their hearts reject brethren that would teach them the truth. Church leadership will often quote the following verse to try and justify themselves:

And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves.

-1 Thessalonians 5:13

First of all, in our article on tithing, we quoted statistics taken by no less than four different organizations who polled evangelical churches and found that over 70% of the pastors don't study the Word of God outside of their preparing for a sermon on Sunday morning, and that 50% of them would leave ministry if they had some other way of making a living. So we need to first establish that most of them aren't really laboring at all. (There are some that do, but most do not.) (Read "Is Tithing a Christian Requirement?" here at creationliberty.com for more details.)

Second, most of them are not laboring in the things of Christ, and finally, esteeming a humble man is not hard at all, but this is a quick Scripture a pride-seeking man can give to demand that you give them the respect they so desperately seek. The bottom line is that it comes down to what's really in their heart, as opposed to what they portray on the outside.

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.

-Matthew 23:25

On the outside, they can hide behind a title of "pastor" or "reverend" or "deacon," but on the inside, they're taking advantage of others for money and respect. The entire hierarchy of new-age church buildings is nearly identical to the corrupt Catholic church that has an obsessive focus on trusting in men.

In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me. -Psalm 56:11

It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man.

-Psalm 118:8

Does the work we are commanded to do in charity and preaching for our Lord Jesus Christ require a title to be put in front of our names? That's a no-brainer - of course not. No one is required to have a title to carry out the work of the Lord God, so why are pastors so insistent on being called pastor, and why are church-goers so insistent on calling the pastor by his title? Again, it all comes down to secret love in their hearts to satisfy their enjoyment of the sound of "pastor" being put in front of their names, and many will be surprised in the end when Christ reveals how many were really lovers of their own selves.

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;
-2 Timothy 3:1-4

Let's start creating some sanctification on this issue. Keep the self-glorifying earthly titles with earthly things, and keep the spiritual Body of Christ cleansed of that leaven.

Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?
-1 Corinthians 5:6

Questions And Arguments

I find it amazing that those who do not hold the title of "reverend" or "pastor" or "deacon," etc., typically write me and say that this article helped them to gain Scriptural understanding about the use of titles, however, those who *DO* carry one of those titles typically write me and tell me I'm wrong. (What a coincidence!) Those who celebrate Christmas tell me I'm wrong about Christmas, those who drink alcohol tell me I'm wrong about alcohol, and those who have to defend their precious titles tell me I'm wrong on this issue as well.

Let's look at a few of the excuses some men are using to defend their titles:

ARGUMENT: *"Paul addressed Agrippa as 'King Agrippa' in Acts 26:27, and since Paul called men by titles, therefore, my pastoral title is justified."*

Let's first take a look at Acts 26:

King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest.
-Acts 26:27

Paul referred to Agrippa as "King Agrippa" in the same manner that we refer to Obama as "President Obama." Why would he have done this?

Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers... Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.
-Romans 13:1-7

(Read "False Doctrine: Unilimited Submission to Government" here at creationliberty.com for more details.)

Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.
-1 Peter 2:17

Paul called Agrippa by his earthly title as king, which is simply following Scripture. However, in the church, as a spiritual entity, we are not to operate in the same manner, as aforementioned:

*But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But **it shall not be so among you:** but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant:*
-Matthew 20:25-27

In terms of logic, this is called a false analogy. The preacher I read this from has taken an example of a worldly title to try to justify his spiritual title.

ARGUMENT: *"Paul addressed Festus as 'most noble Festus' in Act 26:25, and since Paul called men by titles, therefore, my pastoral title is justified."*

Let's go to Acts 26 again:

But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.
-Acts 26:25

This preacher is getting adjective descriptions of a person mixed up with titles. As we established earlier, a title is an extension of one's own name, but "*most noble*" is description of the person's character.

For example, let's look at Luke 1:

It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus,
-Luke 1:3

Theophilus was a born-again Christian, and Luke was describing his moral character.

Hear; for I will speak of excellent things; and the opening of my lips shall be right things. -Proverbs 8:6

excellent (adj): being of great virtue or worth

(See 'excellent', American Dictionary of the English Language, Noah Webster, 1828, retrieved Dec 24, 2014 [webstersdictionary1828.com])

Let's say I was talking to a "Pastor Bob," and I said he was a very kind man, would he then turn around and introduce himself as "Most Kind Bob?" That's ludicrous. Theophilus didn't walk around introducing himself as "Most Excellent Theophilus," nor did Festus walk around introducing himself as "Most Noble Festus." It's absurd to refer to those as "titles," and it's called a false analogy because in reality, these are just describing someone's character, and "*giving honour to whom honour*." (Rom 13:7)

ARGUMENT: "Paul addressed Timothy as 'son Timothy' in 1Ti 1:18, and since Paul called men by titles, therefore, my pastoral title is justified."

This is pretty much the same as the last two argument, but let's go to 1 Timothy 1:

This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare;
-1 Timothy 1:18

This is obviously not used as a title, or Timothy would walk around introducing himself as "Paul's Son Timothy." It's simply a reference to Timothy being like a loving son to Paul in the spiritual sense.

QUESTION: "If we are in agreement that titles are a respecting of persons, how do you explain its use in the King James Bible in the titles of the gospels, e.g., The Gospel According To St. Matthew?"

It's true that they are called "Saint Peter" and "Saint Paul" in the titles of the King James Bible, but the titles of the books are not inspired by God. It is the text itself that is directly from God. A name was put with each book of the New Testament to distinguish the letters from the gospels, and who authored it from who it was written to.

On a personal note, I don't believe the King James Translators were correct in giving them the a title of "saint" in the book titles, even though they are saints in our Lord Jesus Christ. The Catholic church calls many devilish unsaved heathen by the title "Saint" as well, so what's the difference between us and them if we don't sanctify ourselves from attachment to the worldly traditions of men?