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Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

St Paul to the Ephesians

We Christians have a great need to be delivered from the tunnel vision of the present and discover our place in the eternal drama of Gods ageless purpose.

Frank Viola

CONVERTING
THE
CHURCH

²I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him. ³But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

2 Corinthians 11

WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

THE PROPOSAL

⁶“Therefore, say to the Israelites: ‘I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment. ⁷I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. ⁸And I will bring you to the land I swore with uplifted hand to give to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. I will give it to you as a possession. I am the LORD.’ ”

EXODUS 6

- I WILL BRING YOU OUT
- I WILL FREE YOU
- I WILL REDEEM YOU
- I WILL TAKE YOU WITH ME

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the tunnel vision of the present and discover our
place in the eternal drama of Gods ageless purpose.

Frank Viola

GOD IS IN LOVE

⁴No longer will they call you Deserted, or name your land Desolate. But you will be called Hephzibah, and your land Beulah; for the LORD will take delight in you, and your land will be married. ⁵As a young man marries a young woman, so will your Builder marry you; as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you.

Isaiah 62

UNFAITHFUL

6“ ‘Then I passed by and saw you kicking about in your blood, and as you lay there in your blood I said to you, “Live!” 7I made you grow like a plant of the field. You grew and developed and entered puberty. Your breasts had formed and your hair had grown, yet you were stark naked. 8“ ‘Later I passed by, and when I looked at you and saw that you were old enough for love, I spread the corner of my garment over you and covered your nakedness. I gave you my solemn oath and entered into a covenant with you, declares the Sovereign LORD, and you became mine. 9“ ‘I bathed you with water and washed the blood from you and put ointments on you.

¹⁰I clothed you with an embroidered dress and put sandals of fine leather on you. I dressed you in fine linen and covered you with costly garments. ¹¹I adorned you with jewelry: I put bracelets on your arms and a necklace around your neck, ¹²and I put a ring on your nose, earrings on your ears and a beautiful crown on your head. ¹³So you were adorned with gold and silver; your clothes were of fine linen and costly fabric and embroidered cloth. Your food was honey, olive oil and the finest flour. You became very beautiful and rose to be a queen. ¹⁴And your fame spread among the nations on account of your beauty, because the splendor I had given you made your beauty perfect, declares the Sovereign LORD.

¹⁵“ ‘But you trusted in your beauty and used your fame to become a prostitute. You lavished your favors on anyone who passed by and your beauty became his. ¹⁶You took some of your garments to make gaudy high places, where you carried on your prostitution. You went to him, and he possessed your beauty. ¹⁷You also took the fine jewelry I gave you, the jewelry made of my gold and silver, and you made for yourself male idols and engaged in prostitution with them. ¹⁸And you took your embroidered clothes to put on them, and you offered my oil and incense before them.

¹⁹Also the food I provided for you—the flour, olive oil and honey I gave you to eat—you offered as fragrant incense before them. That is what happened, declares the Sovereign LORD.²⁰ “And you took your sons and daughters whom you bore to me and sacrificed them as food to the idols. Was your prostitution not enough?
²¹You slaughtered my children and sacrificed them to the idols. ²²In all your detestable practices and your prostitution you did not remember the days of your youth, when you were naked and bare, kicking about in your blood.

Ezekiel 16

JESUS

- The groom's father arranges the wedding
- The proposal, the cup
- The price of the dowry
- Presents bride with gifts
- They are engaged, she wears a veil in public
- Groom builds a bridal chamber
- Keeps herself alert and ready
- She prepares herself to run a household
- He blows a Shofar announcing his return
- Procession & Consummation
- Feast

ARRANGING THE WEDDING

⁹I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours.

John 17 vs. 9

⁴For he chose us in him before the creation of the world
to be holy and blameless in his sight.

Ephesians 1 vs. 4

THE PROPOSAL : THE CUP

²⁶While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take and eat; this is my body. ²⁷Then he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. ²⁸This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. ²⁹I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.”

Matthew 26

THE PRICE OF THE DOWRY

¹⁹Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; ²⁰you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.... ¹⁸For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, ¹⁹but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

1 Corinthians 6 vs. 20- 1 Peter 1 vs. 18-19.

Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ²⁶to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, ²⁷and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

Ephesians 5

GROOM PRESENTS BRIDE WITH GIFTS

¹⁶And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— ¹⁷the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. ¹⁸I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.

John 14

⁷But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. ⁸This is why it says: “When he ascended on high, he took many captives and gave gifts to his people.” ¹¹So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ¹²to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up

Ephesians 4

ENGAGEMENT : VEIL IN PUBLIC

²I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him. ³But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

2 Corinthians 11

BUILDING THE BRIDAL CHAMBER

²My Father's house has plenty of room; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

John 14

LEARNS TO MANAGE A HOUSEHOLD

⁹But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. ¹⁰Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

1 Peter 2

KEEPS HERSELF "READY"

³⁶“But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

Matthew 24

²I saw the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.

Revelation 21

ANNOUNCES RETURN WITH SHOFAR

¹⁶For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. ¹⁸Therefore encourage one another with these words.

1 Thessalonians 4

PROCESSION & CONSUMMATION

²⁹The bride belongs to the bridegroom. The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom's voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete. ³⁰He must become greater; I must become less."

John 3 vs. 29

FEAST

⁷Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. ⁸Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.” (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of God’s people.) ⁹Then the angel said to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!’ ” And he added, “These are the true words of God.”

Revelation 19

“Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.”

¹⁰And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. ¹¹It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal.

Revelation 21

First, through death, Jesus Christ destroyed everything that would stand in His way of winning the hand of His beloved bride. To wit, He destroyed the sin that would eternally separate her from Him. He destroyed the Law that would suffocate her under a mountain of religious bondage and a pile of crushing condemnation. He destroyed the power of the Evil One who would seek to take her life. He destroyed the world system, which would lure her heart away from Him. He destroyed the old creation, which would defile and corrupt her.

From Eternity to Here

WHAT IS THE
PRIMARY TASK OF
THE CHURCH?

REFRAME OUR STORY

I can only answer the question “What am I to do?” if I
can answer the prior question “Of what story do I find
myself a part?”

Alisdair MacIntyre

SINCERE AND PURE
DEVOTION

²I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him. ³But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

2 Corinthians 11

MAKING OURSELVES
READY

Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for
the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has
made herself ready.

Revelation 19 v 7

Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ²⁶to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, ²⁷and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

Ephesians 5

LONG FOR HIS
APPEARING

Slow October

two rebel leaves fall early from their tree
nonconformist to the August heat
screaming autumn they take the plunge
falling delicate to a world undiscovered
bend my mind towards October and breathe

waiting makes time lethargic
twenty-three years in record time
yet with fall on the horizon
the earth has ceased to spin

two rebel leaves have a luxury I do not
they elope with the earth
leaving me to revel in a pleasure expected
awaiting the season to change and never turn back
bend my mind toward October and breathe

Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth,” for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ²I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴“He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’ or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.” ⁵He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”

Revelation 21

¹⁷The Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let those who hear say, “Come!” Let those who are thirsty come; and let all who wish take the free gift of the water of life.

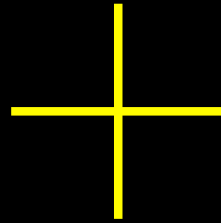
Revelation 22

CONVERTING CHRISTIANS TO THE CHURCH

Tuesday, September 7, 2010

Behold the towering passion of God, The church, the ecclesia, is His ultimate passion. She is His central thought. She is His eternal purpose. This glorious woman is in Him, by Him, through Him, and to Him.

Gods grand mission is to obtain a bride who passionately loves His Son. Any missional endeavor, therefore, that doesn't put the church front and center falls short of Gods central thought.



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