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IS MY CHURCH DRIFTING?

The *King James Version* admonishes us to “give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip” (Hebrews 2:1). It is as if the truth could slip out of our hands, and we could slip out of His grace. “Drift” refers to something that has carelessly been permitted to become lost. It is another word for “shift.” In his excellent book *Historical Drift*, Dr. Arnold L. Cook explained that the biblical word *drift* means “to let something slip away—can describe a ship, which drifts by the dock due to the carelessness of the mariner who failed to calculate carefully the wind or tide.”

WHEN DO CHURCHES BEGIN TO DRIFT?

1. Churches drift when they fail to pass on the truth to successive generations.

2. Churches drift when they move away from their foundational doctrines.

The trend is for church denominations to drift (or move) away from their foundational doctrines over time. It does not have to be this way. Drifting can be prevented. It must be prevented.

3. Churches drift when they move away from soul winning.

4. Churches drift when they concentrate on merely maintaining the organizational structure rather than actively pursuing a vision.

5. Churches drift when seminaries and Bible schools fail in training the leaders.

Timothy Beougher and Alvin Reid in *Evangelism for a Changing World* cautioned, “When a denomination’s theology changes, that change almost always begins in the seminaries that train its leaders.”

6. Churches drift when Satan lulls us into spiritual sleep rather than the church experiencing revival. *Revival* means “to bring back to life.” As believers backslide they become a corpse. Revival is imperative.

7. Churches drift because their leadership drifts.

Arnold Cook stated, “Organizations don’t drift, only their leaders.” There is a backsliding in the pulpit before there is a backsliding in the pew.

8. Churches drift when there is the lack of vision. See Proverbs 29:18.

9. Churches drift when there is a desire for the world (and to be like everyone else).

Look closely at what happened to Lot. The same picture could happen today.

- Looked toward Sodom (Genesis 13:10).
- Chose the ground near Sodom (Genesis 13:11).
- Pitched his tent toward Sodom (Genesis 13:12).
- Moved to Sodom and dwelt there (Genesis 14:12).
- Became like the people of Sodom. Acted like a citizen (Genesis 19:9).
- Gave his daughters to Sodom (Genesis 19:8).
- Hesitated in leaving the city (Genesis 19:15-16).

We should fight against compromise and the pull of the things of this world. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15).

The case of Sodom and Gomorrah is not the only biblical example of historical drift. In the Book of Judges the appalling cycle of drift is repeated seven times.

- The people fall into sin.
- God disciplines them with foreign oppression.
- The people cry out in repentance.
- God raises up a deliverer.
- Peace is restored.

God provided them with leaders called "judges," but still "every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25).

The following adaptation from *Historical Drift* is another illustration of the typical evidence of loss of commitment. (Several additions have been made.) Watch for these "lacks" in your life and in local church.

IS YOUR CHURCH LACKING?

Lack of faithfulness	Inconsistent church attendance. Quest for fewer and shorter services.
Lack of stewardship	Not faithful in tithing and giving of time, talent, and treasure.
Lack of love and understanding for God's Word	No apparent desire for serious Bible study.
Lack of biblical preaching	More interested in modern trends, methods, and current events than sound, doctrinal preaching and teaching.
Lack of worship	Not interested in consecrating one's life, bowing, and submitting to God as King of kings.
Lack of prayer	No interest in attending prayer meetings.
Lack of repentance	No interest in deep soul-searching and conformity to God's will and Word.
Lack of evangelism	No involvement in witnessing.
Lack of vision	No involvement in outreach or missions.
Lack of holiness	No apparent interest in godly living.