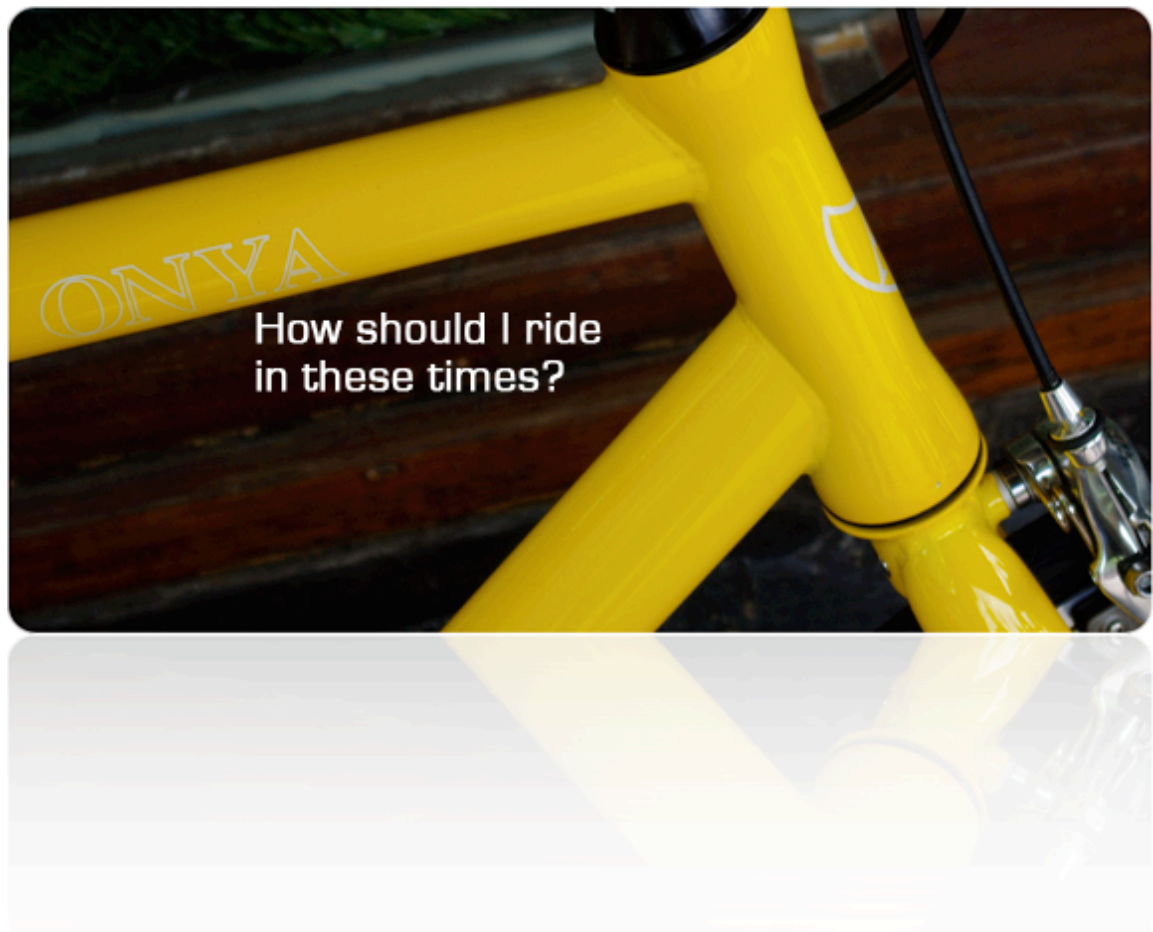

Endangered Species.

Why is my church or denomination simply fading away?

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Sometimes we may puzzle away at the fact that despite our constant efforts, there are some flashes of brightness, but the general direction in which we are headed as a Christian community is downwards toward extinction. Why? Here are some reasons. The most common and obvious is that our denomination or community is not really about Jesus. It's about itself. The other is more subtle.

A common and devious misconception is to imagine that the New Covenant is a theology that we are at liberty to accept or reject. I wish to state emphatically that the New Covenant is not *a theology*, unless for some reason a person or a denomination is seeking to avoid its implications. There are denominations with such vested interests. They interpret the New Covenant through a lens of doctrine rather than fitting their doctrine to the New Covenant. The New Covenant simply is. It's God's new and living way. It is the glorious unfolding of making the people of the world one with God in Jesus.

The worst thing that one could do as a leader in the church today would be to live in the Old Covenant when God has created the New. The second worst thing that could be done as a leader would be to resist the revelation of New Covenant living that the Holy Spirit has been attempting to rub like mud onto our blind eyes. The third worst thing that one could do in this state of blindness and mistaken identity (a worker, not a son) would be to promote the view that there is nothing in the New Covenant that is not in the Old. That's absurd. It's called the New Covenant because it's God's *new and living way* – Jesus. At best this is ignorant and at worst it is dishonest to so pervert the New Covenant that we have made it the Old. Jesus said Himself, 'I am the Way. He said through the writer of Hebrews, 'When He said, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear' Heb 8.13 NASB.

Perhaps obsolescence in the norm in your community.

Would you rather the Old Covenant disappear or your community disappear? We are not called merely to exercise spiritual gifts in a setting of performance orientation. We are called to live in the Spirit. If one should persist in teaching an old covenant of the law of Moses and works when the Father has made a new and living way of Jesus and Spirit, two things can happen.

[1] Your community will disappear. Why?

[a] It has no innate strength.

[b] There is no revelation.

[c] There is no power to liberate from demonic control.

[d] It has no power to bind God's people together.

[e] It cannot resist the assaults of the Enemy.

2. The other thing that can happen is that we will collect around ourselves a community of strident dwarves who prefer the false security of the old shadows to the real adventure of the new Jesus. Jesus did not come to multiply law. He came to multiply Himself in you, in the market place and in the nations.

Two personal qualities most resistant to the Holy Spirit and Christ's Kingdom are pride and fear. Pride reveals itself in the attitude, 'I already know this,' or 'I'll define this as new covenant theology and discard it' or 'I've got a handle on those arguments' or 'I'm tired of change. I'm stopping where I am,' together with the complaint 'We are never good enough so let's dig in our heels and stay on this side of the Jordan.' The key symptom of pride in our heart is the attitude 'I can't be taught.'

Fear often supports pride. Fear of identity loss, fear of rejection, fear of political consequences, fear of the devil, fear of God taking us beyond our comfort zone, fear of having no cage that we can call home, fear of losing control over ourselves and our prison of ideas, fear of living in the freedom of the spirit instead of the security of the letter, fear of turning over our lives to the sovereignty of God. Give up the fear of all this stuff and fear God! Abraham believed God and it was counted towards him as righteousness.



So why do some church communities plateau, stall then fade away. This can happen in Bible believing communities because, although the people in them believe in the Bible, they don't believe what God has done through the New Covenant. The reason for this is that Jesus, God's Son has life in Himself. We as humans do not.

Jesus top priority is for us to [do what He says](#). Since His ascension this is to live in the Spirit. Life in the Spirit is the life of the New Covenant. This is living in Jesus as sons and daughters of God on a diet of the fruit of the tree of life. As stated repeatedly in these posts life is eating Jesus. Rights to establish the New Jerusalem, which is the city of God belong to those who eat from the tree of life. Those who eat this fruit enter the city of God because they are the city of God. They are Christ's dwelling place – [a city without walls](#), great in population and filled with the glory of the Lord's Presence.

Life in the Spirit is as radical as walking on water. It means being sustained by what is more substantial than what we can see or understand – the Spirit of God. But for many of God's people life in the Spirit is a problem. Questions arise. Is God somehow robbing us of real righteousness? Are there giants in the

land? Is Christ in me really enough? Don't I need a good dose of self effort and some rules to measure myself against? The Father's answer is no. You need my Son!

But here's the rub. Sadly, rather than step into life in the Spirit many decide that's it's too hard. Some garnish their work with spiritual gifts. Others industriously embark on Bible study and good works. These things in themselves are good. But they are not as good as obedience and not necessarily the Kingdom of God – not when they are an excuse for avoiding the will of the King. Not when they are a reason for unbelief and avoiding the [mystery that the Father had kept hidden](#) until He revealed Jesus, a righteousness from God!

To all who would rather believe in themselves than believe God, This is why Jesus says, 'Away from Me workers of iniquity. [I don't know you.](#)' Prior to the reign of David, Samuel said to the people, 'Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams' 1 Sam 15.22 ISV.

If those who live in the Spirit have rights to the tree of life, those who live in law also live under rights. I mean the legal right of the Enemy to afflict and degrade the lives of those who choose his regime of the law of sin and death. But those who live in Jesus live in the law of the Spirit of Life – a life of increasing holiness and growth into the fullness of Christ. As Jesus said through Paul 'All who depend on the works of the law are under a curse. For it is written, "A curse on everyone who does not obey everything that is written in the book of the law!" Gal 3.10 ISV