

Year End & Rich Time Concept in the Early Church, By Victor Beshir

2011 is about to end its page and a new page is about to start. To reflect on time, let me introduce you to the concept of time in the early church, when the church was but only one church in the whole world, enjoying the one faith, one baptism (Ephesians 4:5), one worship, and one richness of spirituality. When Christ was incarnated, He entered into the world to establish His kingdom and since His kingdom is eternal, He mixed our limited time with eternity. He incarnated in order for us to live eternity while we still live on earth. This was well manifested when He started His service by calling, "Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand" (Matt 4:17). From this call time for Christians has become richly blessed since when we're in Christ we're a new creation (2 Cor 5:17), children of God (John 1:12), enjoying His eternal kingdom.

This concept became very clear after His resurrection when he was raised on Sunday, the first day or the Eighth Day of the week, as the Fathers of the early church loved to call it. In their perspective, it is a day out of time or beyond time since it does fall after the seventh day of the week, the end of the week cycle. It's the day of the Resurrection that starts to stay since we all clothed with the resurrected Christ.

There's a significant reference to the eighth day in the Old Testament. Circumcision took place on the eighth day, as we read, "And on the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised" (Leviticus 12:2-4). Why circumcision took place on the eighth day? Because it's a type of baptism. Through baptism we become children of God and inheritance of His kingdom. Therefore, circumcision took place on the eighth day to foretell the good news about the coming baptism, in which we start living in the kingdom of God and its time of eternity.

So, for us, Christians, we're no longer live under the burden of time, but rather we live in the year of the Lord as Jesus says in the synagogue of Nazareth in the beginning of His service, "*He sent me To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD*" (Luke 4:19). The acceptable year of the Lord has started at that time and it will not end because His kingdom is eternal and the year of the Lord is everlasting. We're carried by the fullness of grace, enlighten by the true light, the Lord Jesus Christ, fed by the Holy Spirit, and live in the eternal year of the Lord.

My friends, you have touched just one of the rich concept of the early church. All views of the early church are so deep and carry unmatched nourishment for the soul. Now, do you realize the richness of the early Church that was established by Christ? This spiritual richness was handed down in the holy Church from one generation to the following one until it reaches us nowadays. Please compare this richness with the church you're attending. Do you find in the church you attending the same richness of the early church? Does your soul get the spiritual nourishment it need in your current church?

Does the church you attend follow the faith of the early church? Does it has baptism of water and spirit, as Philip baptized the Ethiopian (Acts 8: 36-39)? Does it offer the Lord's supper with the same faith that Jesus has established when He says, "*Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him* (John 6:53-56)?

Is worship in the church you attend a liturgical worship, following the same worship given to the Church by the Lord and handed down from His apostles? Or it is just a sermon preceded by uplifting songs and followed by songs and final benediction or it's a prayer void of all rich worship-elements mentioned in the Bible?

Sadly, most of new churches have not received what was handed down from Christ and His apostles. The richness this face book page talks about is found in the Apostolic churches, the churches established by one of Jesus' apostles. Those churches have kept the gems of the faith and the richness of worship. They're known as the Orthodox Churches. They have local parishes in every city in North America, Europe, and Australia. Search the Internet or local phone book for "Orthodox Church" to find the nearest one to you. Here's one guide for one of those Orthodox churches in the U.S.:

<http://www.copticchurch.net/topics/directory/>

Do you agree with me that the New Year is a good time to reflect on your spiritual life, its needs, and the church you attend? New Year is a time to make decisions regarding your eternal life. To know more about the early church, please go back and read more on this face book page, "Looking for a Church As Old As Christianity," especially what is included in NOTES (You find it in the right margin of the page). And if you still have questions, please feel free to write to me, vbeshir@gmail.com