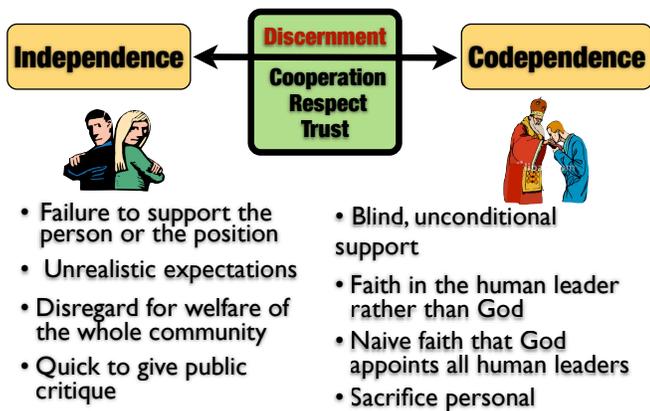
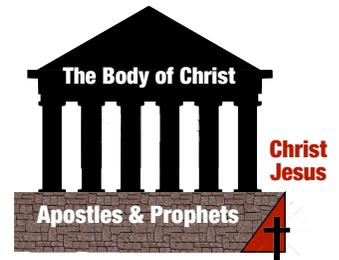


Two most common mistakes Christians make in relationship to Church leaders.



Ephesians 2:20-21

“having been built on the **foundation** of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the **cornerstone**, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy **temple** in the Lord.”



- God’s plan includes human spiritual leaders.
- We cannot, and will not realize God’s purposes without them.
- Spiritual leaders are to edify and enable us.

Discernment is necessary.

1 John 4:1

“Beloved, **do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits** to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.”

Discernment is difficult.

Hebrews 5

“¹³ For everyone partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the Word of Righteousness: for he is a infant. ¹⁴ But solid food is for the mature, who **because of practice have their senses trained to discern both good and evil**”

Discernment is difficult because false apostles can look good. signs, sacrifice, sincerity, service.

Matthew 24:24

“For false Christs and false prophets will arise and **will show great signs and wonders**, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect.”

Matthew 7

“²¹ Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. ²² Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, **did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?**’ ²³ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; *depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.*’”

An important distinction

False leaders that are heretics

depart from fundamentals of faith & practice

not recognized by the larger church body

Flawed leaders that are human

may be flawed in parts of their teaching & living

recognized by the larger church body

2 Corinthians 11

“¹² But what I am doing, I will continue to do, that I may cut off opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the matter about which they are boasting.”

Characteristics of a false apostle

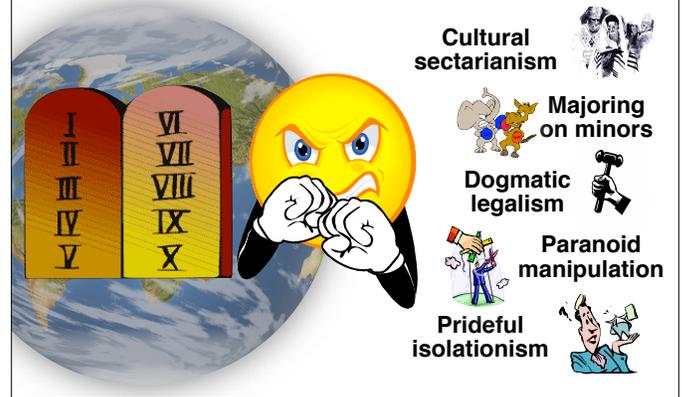
They bear the image of something other than Jesus.

**Test of authenticity #1
Orientation (Christ followers)**

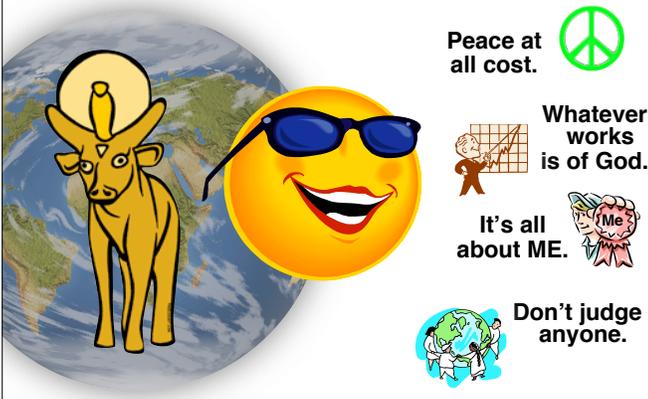
All false apostles have an image bearing problem.



Some false apostles have a segregation problem.



Some false apostles have an integration problem.



2 Corinthians 11

“¹³ For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ.”

They claim a position that they have not been given.

*Test of authenticity #2
Ordination (recognized by the church)*

Ordination
*(consecration or setting apart)
to a special position or role in the
Body of Christ.*

- ◆ *It is a function of the larger Church body.*
- ◆ *It should not be done too quickly.*
- ◆ *It is a way to identify authentic leaders.*

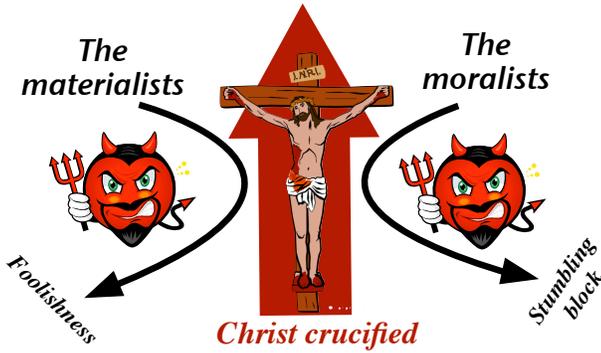
2 Corinthians 11

“¹⁴ And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. ¹⁵ Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness;”

They serve a Kingdom but not its (suffering servant) King.

*Test of authenticity #3
Orthodoxy (true to the fundamentals)*

“23 but we preach **Christ crucified**, to Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness, 24 but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.” | **Corinthians I** |

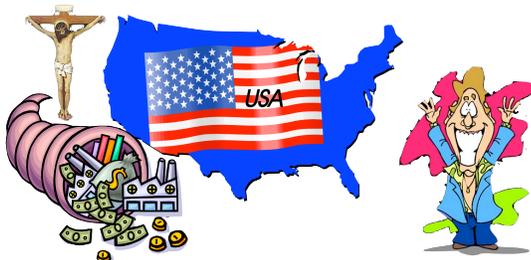


When the Kingdom supplants the King liberals confuse the Good News with the “secular utopia” -



- where Jesus is a poster-boy for a political agenda.

When the Kingdom supplants the King conservatives confuse the Good News with the “good life.”



- where Jesus is a water-boy for a personal agenda.

Both sides share more in common than they think



- They both are attracted to the Kingdom.
- They both put their hope in this life.
- They both see American culture as key.
- They both see Jesus as a “means.”

2 Corinthians 11

“15 . . . whose end shall be according to their deeds.”

They will eventually be exposed by their deeds.

**Test of authenticity #4
Orthodoxy (life testimony)**

Identifying false spiritual leaders

- ✓ This is not easy and **requires experience.**
- ✓ It is easy to judge by the wrong criteria - **signs, sacrifice, sincerity, service.**
- ✓ Are they **Cross of Christ** oriented?
- ✓ Are they **ordained** by the broader church?
- ✓ Are they orthodox in their **teaching**?
- ✓ Are they orthodox in their **testimony**?