**Where Is the Church (3)?**

 **Disappearing Faith**

 By Victor Beshir

Individuals are not only starting new churches without good understanding of Christianity, but also beginning to change the faith in some well-established churches. A friend of mine belongs to the Lutheran Church, came to me one day asking, what to do you do when your priest denies Christ’s divinity and resurrection? My friend question echoes a spreading trend in many churches nowadays. Take for example, the Episcopalian Church (the Anglican Church). Some of its clergy openly deny the divinity of Christ, the validity of the Gospel and other parts of the Bible, Christ’s resurrection, just to mention a few.

I told my friend this reflects a major shift of understanding of Christianity. Two thousand years ago, the New Testament declared clearly,

“Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you **exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.** For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord Godand our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Jude 1:3, 4).

The above-last epistle in the New Testament before the book of Revelation-states many facts:

1. Faith was delivered to be accepted, and this is why it is called ‘faith.’ Faith is not a matter to accept or to refuse based on your own logical conclusion.
2. The faith was delivered once for all, which means there is no extended time to think or to re-think. All elements of faith were fully delivered together. There is no need for any additions or alterations. You must take what you are given here, you cannot pick and choose.
3. It described those who tried to change the faith as “ungodly men,” and referred to them as people “turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.’ Moreover, it condemned their sayings.

This is the faith of the Christianity from the first century. The Church kept this faith with a very high price, its hundreds of thousands of martyrs who preferred to die than to deny the divinity of Christ. Many martyrs died because they refused to deny that they were witnesses of Christ’s resurrection.

It is very sad to see this happening, because when you deny Christ divinity you’re eliminating salvation, and without salvation there is no Christianity. Those people need to go back to read the New Testament again in humbleness. They need to enlighten their souls by reading the Christian history and the writings of the Church Fathers. When I refer to the Church Fathers, I am not referring to people belonged to any specific church since they lived before the schism of the church in the fifth century. They lived when the church in the whole world was one church, following one faith that was delivered from the apostles of Christ-originally was given by the Lord Himself, “one Lord, one faith, one baptism” (Ephesians 4:5).

Back to the question: What to do? My answer is to **find a church that has the following faith characteristics**:

1. **Apostolic:** means the church was established by one of the apostles of Christ in the first century to ensure that the teaching you get there is delivered from the apostles. If the church is not established by the one of the apostles, make sure it was established by another apostolic church.
2. It has **Kept the faith as it was delivered without changes or additions**: Unfortunately, some apostolic churches added elements to the original faith and dogma, such as the “Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Sun,” “Purgatory,” and “immaculate conception of Virgin Mary.” I will discuss those issues in the future.

There other important church characters that I will talk about in future articles.