

## 5 Common Elements Found in Moves of God that are in a state of Decline

Over time, every move of God eventually is taken over and comes under the control of man, becomes only a shadow of what once was reality, forces God out because the group “is it” and has all the answers. Eventually the group becomes spiritually dead. One of the first attitudes that is indicative of this decline is “we see – others don’t”, or “we are the only ones faithfully representing the Lord”. Which of course is in reality spiritual pride.

We see this pattern both from Genesis to Revelation and in all of history. From all the evidence we have in both, the pattern seems to be indeed inevitable. I may in the future go through a list of examples where this is true, but perhaps the ideal one would be Judaism itself – the only religion that God ever gave man. It had so declined from what God originally gave Abraham and Moses that when Jesus took on flesh it was almost the exact opposite of what God had intended. So much so that it not only rejected the God that had revealed Himself to both the patriarchs, it crucified Him. That pattern of declension can be shown to eventually be the result of every move of God with man.

The reasons behind the inevitability of this declension is an issue that needs to be studied, but I will not do so here. Here, I only want to point out some commonalities of almost all of these declensions.

There seems to be 5 common facts or realities about a group in spiritual decline.

1. The decline usually occurs after 25 years, or one generation. It can be much less or more, but that is when a real departure from the group's being led by the Holy Spirit seems to occur. What God began, men very gradually take control of – the group no longer prays about many things because, after all, years ago God showed them what to do. Where once the Lord Jesus was initially prominent, a man or men become prominent. I could list many symptoms but I want to be as brief as possible in this document.
2. Saints begin to leave the group. They are not the rebellious, but they are ones who love the Lord greatly and who have tried to deal with the issues of declension over many years. Eventually they find that they cannot remain faithful to the Lord and continue their personal walk with Him in the increasingly restrictive confines of the group. They only leave when they just cannot stay any longer. They are either led out by the Holy Spirit or forced out by the group.
3. The group immediately attributes the leaving of others to Satan. But this declaration itself is actually a carnal, fleshly response to hide and cover up the things that are going on internally that are the result of the spiritual decline of the group. Those in the group who declare this are most passionate about it because they truly believe it. Because this is a form of deceit, it actually opens the door to further declension.
4. Falsehoods are told about those who have left, almost always based on some fact or facts that are twisted and distorted into lies. One person or a few is/are chosen to be named as the “evil” leader(s) and deceiver(s) of all those who have left and they are made a scapegoat – and the enemy. This, of course, along with #3, make perfect sense to everyone in the group and this becomes the official narrative of the group.
5. Over time, a majority have left, and a small remnant remains (“we are the faithful”), but the group is dead spiritually. It is like the proverbial frog in the pot of water on the stove oblivious to the slowly rising temperature of the water. The group continues the motions it has known for many years, because, after all, they came from God. Little changes externally. The group still holds fast to the truths that were so important in the beginning – and may be quite “correct” doctrinally. But the spiritual reality is gone, and the vibrant spiritual life that was there in the early years is gone. The Holy Spirit is gone – Jesus is standing on the outside – knocking on the door.

Most of those who remain in the group are oblivious to the change. Their focus is on the group, its uniqueness, its specialness, its teaching, its doctrine, its leaders – and not on the Lord Jesus.

The form remains. But it is only a shadow. There is no life in it. It retains its name, but without the presence of God. Its leaders are never wrong, and always know the Lord's way – and must be believed, trusted and followed.

At the same time, there are those in the group who know “something is wrong”, they just can't put their finger on what it is. They stay in the group, because, after all, “where else would we go?”

The question itself is both revealing and exposing. It exposes the mentality, “we alone see”, or “we are the only group who is right,” or “we alone are God's work” or, “there are no others who have it right – we alone do.” It also says, “this group is my god. I will follow them anywhere.” The group in a very subtle way, has supplanted, or replaced the Lord Jesus. Those in it cannot see the need to just walk with Jesus, and go with Him, “outside the camp” - the real call to all believers (Heb. 13:12 - 14).

This is most interesting – because the group itself was a result of its founders going “outside the camp” - to follow Jesus. The group becomes the very thing that its founders left. Things have come “full circle”. What existed in the beginning – has died. A missionary in Africa described it thus, “Every move of God begins in a cave, and dies in a cathedral.”

God has moved on to another group who just wants to know and follow Him, walking with Him wherever He goes. But the group that began “in the Lord” goes on and on - still thinking they “are it”, oblivious to the fact that God is no longer in their midst.

I believe that Heb. 13:14 confirms that every move of God among men is temporary and expedient from God's view. A “city” is people in a common locality. A corporate expression of God's people is in many aspects a city – people together. The Lord Jesus used the term, “a city on a hill”. On earth there will never be any corporate group that represents the Lord's interests that lasts. Every one ends up being taken over by man, and slowly forcing God out. His presence cannot stay where man rules. Ezekiel 9:3, 10:4, 11:23, Rev. 3:20. That's the bad news.

The good news is that God will always have His testimony on earth, and will find a group of saints somewhere who are lowly, broken, needy, and desperately hungry for God. He will come down and presence Himself with them, answer their heart-cries and prayers – and a new and fresh move will begin. There will never be another Pentecost – but there can be many micro-copies of it.